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Senate Bill 575 (as introduced 8-24-11)
Sponsor: Senator Howard C. Walker
Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 10-17-11

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Pupil Transportation Act to extend to a public transit bus transporting pupils certain provisions regarding school bus lights and the receiving and discharging of pupils.

"Public transit bus" would mean a bus used to transport pupils to or from school, if the bus is operated by a public transit agency operating under any of the following:

- A county, city, township, or village as provided by law, or other authority incorporated under Public Act 55 of 1963 (which governs mass transportation system authorities).
- An authority incorporated under the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act, or that operates a transportation service according to an interlocal agreement under the Urban Cooperation Act.
- A contract entered into according to Public Act 8 of 1967 (Ex Sess) (which governs intergovernmental transfers of functions and responsibilities) or Public Act 35 of 1951 (which governs intergovernmental contracts between municipal corporations).
- An authority incorporated under the Public Transportation Authority Act or a nonprofit corporation organized under the Nonprofit Corporation Act that provides transportation services.
- An authority financing public improvements to transportation systems under the Revenue Bond Act.

Under the Public Transportation Act, a school bus may be equipped with a flashing, oscillating, or rotating light mounted on the roof that displays a white light to the front, side, and rear of the bus. The Act prescribes the conditions under which the bus driver may actuate the light, but provides that the driver is not required to use it. Under the bill, these provisions also would apply to a public transit bus.

The Act requires a school bus to be equipped with alternately flashing lights. (On a school bus manufactured before October 1, 1990, the lights are red. On a bus manufactured on or after that date, the lights are red and amber.) A school bus driver must actuate the alternately flashing lights only when the school bus is stopped or stopping on a highway or private road to receive or discharge pupils. The driver may not actuate the alternately flashing lights when operating on a public highway or private road and transporting passengers primarily other than school pupils. Under the bill, the provisions regarding actuating the lights also would apply to a public transit bus.

The Act prescribes procedures for the receipt and discharge of pupils while a school bus is operating upon the public highways or private roadways open to the public. The procedures vary depending on whether the bus is equipped with red or red and amber lights, and whether pupils are required to cross the roadway. Where pupils are not required to cross the roadway and the road is wide enough for the bus to pull to the far right of or off the roadway or private road, the school administrator or other authorized person or entity may approve the use of hazard warning lights instead of the alternately flashing lights. The bill would extend these provisions to a public transit bus.

MCL 257.1805 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State government. There could be an indeterminate cost to public transit agencies to install alternately flashing lights on buses without such lighting, if the agencies chose to do so. The cost is indeterminate and dependent on the number of buses on which lighting would be installed.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.