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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 265 (as introduced 2-22-07)
Sponsor: Senator Wayne Kuipers
Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 4-13-07

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to permit a vehicle owned by a volunteer member of an emergency management unit to be equipped with emergency lights, which could be used only at the scene of an emergency.

Under the Code, an authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with flashing, rotating, or oscillating red lights for use when responding to an emergency call. The lights must be mounted permanently to the vehicle or attached with magnets or suction cups, and must be clearly visible from all directions from a distance of 500 feet when in use.

For purposes of equipping a vehicle with flashing, rotating, or oscillating red lights during an emergency, "authorized emergency vehicle" currently means a vehicle owned and operated by a federally recognized nonprofit charitable organization that is used exclusively for assistance during that emergency. The bill also would include a motor vehicle owned by a volunteer member of an emergency management unit of a local governmental entity, if authorized by that entity.

Under the bill, the requirement that the lights be used when responding to an emergency call would apply unless the authorized emergency vehicle were owned by a volunteer member of an emergency management unit of a local governmental entity. In that case, the lights could be operated only when at the scene of an emergency.

The Code provides that a person operating emergency lights other than when responding to an emergency call is guilty of a misdemeanor. Under the bill, that penalty would apply to a person operating lights at any time other than as allowed above.

MCL 257.2 & 257.698

Legislative Analyst: Curtis Walker

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on local government. There are no data to indicate how many offenders would be convicted of the offense. Local governments would incur the costs of incarceration and misdemeanor probation in local facilities, which vary by county. Additional penal fine revenue would benefit public libraries.

Fiscal Analyst: Lindsay Hollander

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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.