

DATE: February 4, 2003

TO: Senate Transportation and Economic Development Committee

FROM: Troy E. Costales, Manager
Transportation Safety Division

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 181

Introduction

Senate Bill 181 updates the Oregon Vehicle Code statutes pertaining to vehicle equipment standards, modifies language to make the statutes easier to interpret and provides more, easier to understand information for the public, the judicial branch and law enforcement

Purpose

Vehicle Equipment Standards - The bill modifies the role of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) in establishing and enforcing standards for vehicle equipment. Through statute and administrative rule, Oregon adopted the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for vehicle safety equipment. Current statutes list ODOT as approval, certification and regulatory agency for many Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards that are actually under the authority of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The bill removes the language that makes ODOT the approval, certification and regulatory agency for equipment administered by NHTSA and inserts language that allows ODOT to adopt recognized federal standards.

Equipment Review - Current statutes require manufacturers of automobiles and child safety systems to submit safety belt, safety harnesses, child safety systems and their anchorage locations for their vehicles and child safety systems to ODOT. The statute requires ODOT to approve or disapprove of the equipment and anchorage locations and notifies the manufacturer by letter of approval before their vehicles and child safety systems may be sold in Oregon. This has never taken place in Oregon. We are requesting changes to a variety of statutes that are similarly worded.

Equipment Lists - Under current law, ODOT is required to keep a list of the equipment we approve and test and provide that list to those who inquire about the equipment. To my knowledge, this has never been done by ODOT. The modified language in this bill removes this function.

Light Covers - Violations prohibiting light covers on certain vehicle lights are being brought together in one section of statute. Currently these violations were located in several sections.

Summary

Approval of SB 181 will update the statutes relating to vehicle equipment to reflect current practices and will make the statutes easier to interpret for the public. We urge your support of SB 181.