

DATE: April 23, 2003

TO: House Transportation Committee

FROM: Troy E. Costales, Manager
Transportation Safety Division

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 181-A

Introduction

Senate Bill 181-A 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

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 the 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.

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 requires the manufacturer to be notified with a 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.

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.

The bill includes language that prohibits light covers on certain vehicle lights. Currently the violations for covers are located in five different locations. This will locate them in one place at the suggestion of Legislative Counsel.

Summary

The bill updates the statutes removing ODOT from administration of many federal motor vehicle safety standards, which ODOT has no legal authority to administer and makes the statutes easier to interpret for the public and easier to administer by ODOT.