

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. House Bill 1958

PRINTER NO. 3774

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact

FUND

Motor License Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

December 11, 2017

PRIME SPONSOR

Representative Rothman

DESCRIPTION

House Bill 1958 amends Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, authorizing the use of highly automated work zone vehicles and platooning.

The legislation defines "highly automated work zone vehicle" as a motor vehicle equipped either with an automated driving system or connected by wireless communication or other technology to another vehicle allowing for coordinated or controlled movement that is used in an active work zone as implemented by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (department) or the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (commission).

The legislation defines "platoon" as a group of motor vehicles, buses, military vehicles or motor carrier vehicles operated by a human traveling in a unified manner at electronically coordinated speeds at following distances that are closer than would be reasonable and prudent without such coordination. The term does not include a school bus or a school vehicle.

House Bill 1958 also adds a new § 3317 (relating to platooning). This section provides for the following related to platooning:

- Non-lead vehicles in a platoon shall not be subject to the provisions of § 3310 (relating to following too closely);
- All vehicles in a platoon must be marked with a visual identifier on the power unit, as determined by the department, after consultation with the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) and published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin;
- Restricts a platoon to the following:
 - 1) A maximum of three vehicles;
 - 2) Vehicles shall travel only on limited access highways or interstate highways, unless otherwise permitted by the department or the commission; and
 - 3) The department or the commission may restrict vehicle movement for operational or safety reasons, including, but not limited to, emergency conditions.

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The legislation adds a new Chapter 85 (Highly Automated Vehicles) with the following sections:

- § 8501 (relating to definitions) defines "Advisory Committee" as the Highly Automated Vehicle Advisory Committee established in Section 8504 (relating to Highly Automated Vehicle Advisory Committee);
- § 8502 (relating to Highly Automated Work Zone Vehicle) requires the department or the commission to authorize locations in Pennsylvania, on a periodic basis, to permit deployment of a highly automated work zone vehicle. A highly automated work zone vehicle shall not require a human operator only when operating in an active work zone;
- § 8503 (relating to Commonwealth agency) authorizes the department and the commission to deploy a highly automated work zone vehicle or platoon if the department or the commission owns the vehicle. The department, commission, its officials and employees shall continue to enjoy sovereign immunity and official immunity and remain immune from suits when acting in accordance with § 3317 or § 8502; and
- § 8504 (relating to Highly Automated Vehicle Advisory Committee) establishes the Highly Automated Vehicle Advisory Committee (advisory committee) under the jurisdiction of the department. The advisory committee shall consist of not more than 21 members. The members shall be as follows:
 - 1) The Secretary of Transportation (secretary), who shall chair the advisory committee;
 - 2) The Commissioner of the PSP;
 - 3) The Chief Executive Officer of the commission;
 - 4) The Chairperson and Minority Chairperson of the Transportation Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives; and
 - 5) Not more than 14 members of the public, appointed by the secretary, that may include a diverse group of representatives, as determined by the secretary.

House Bill 1958 directs the advisory committee to advise and consult the Governor, the secretary and the General Assembly on all aspects of Highly Automated Vehicles and authorizes the advisory committee to do any of the following:

- Develop technical guidance;
- Evaluate best practices;
- Recommend legislation and policy; and
- Engage in continued research and evaluation of the technology necessary to ensure safe testing, deployment and continued innovation in this Commonwealth.

In addition, the legislation requires the following:

- The advisory committee shall meet at least three times annually;
- The secretary shall maintain a record of meeting attendance by members;
- Minutes of the meetings shall be prepared and filed with the advisory committee and distributed to each member. Each record shall be a matter of public record.
- An appointed member may not receive per diem expenses; and

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- The department shall provide appropriate staff support to enable the advisory committee to properly carry out the advisory committee's functions.

Finally, the bill provides that the department shall provide an annual report of the activities on the department's publicly accessible internet website.

This act shall take effect in 90 days.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Enactment of this legislation will have no adverse fiscal impact on Commonwealth funds.