

DEC 06 2010

MEMO



Senate of Pennsylvania  
December 3, 2010

TO: ALL SENATORS

FROM: Stewart J. Greenleaf *Stewart*

SUBJECT: Cosponsorship -- **Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (Zero Emissions)**

I am reintroducing **Senate Bill 152**, amending the Vehicle Code, Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, to provide for the operation of Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs) on certain highways or roadways in the Commonwealth.

A low speed electric vehicle, also referred to as a neighborhood electric vehicle, is defined by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as any four-wheeled electric vehicle whose top speed is greater than 20 miles per hour but not greater than 25 miles per hour. While these electric vehicles must meet specific federal safety standards, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has determined that they cannot be legally driven on state roadways since they fail to meet state safety inspection requirements for a passenger vehicle.

My legislation permits the operation of NEVs on any highway or roadway where the posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour or less. The measure gives discretion to the Secretary of Transportation and local governments to approve travel on selected roadways under their jurisdiction with a posted speed limit between 25 and 35 miles per hour. However, it also gives them the authority to prohibit the operation of these vehicles on any roadway under their jurisdiction if they determine it is necessary in the interest of safety. It also requires NEVs crossing roadways with posted speed limits greater than 35 miles per hour to do so only at signalized intersections unless a non-signalized intersection is approved by the Secretary or local government having jurisdiction.

Under the bill, NEVs are considered motor vehicles and must comply with the rules of the road and safety provisions (i.e., restraint systems) like other motor vehicles. A NEV shall be considered a passenger car for the purposes of titling, registration and licensing, and the vehicle shall not be operated at a time in which the number of passengers exceeds the number of available seat belts in the vehicle. These electric vehicles shall be equipped in accordance with federal safety requirements (49 C.F.R. 571.500), which include items such as headlamps; stop lamps; turn signal lamps; a windshield; a speedometer; an odometer; brakes for each wheel; and seat belts. In addition, a slow moving emblem must be affixed on the rear of the vehicle. Finally, NEVs would not be subject to regular emission inspections and would be exempt from section 4703 of the Vehicle Code (operation of a vehicle without official certificate of inspection) given that they meet federal motor vehicle safety standards.

NEVs are very friendly to the environment as compared to gas or diesel-powered vehicles as they produce no emissions. These zero-emission vehicles will not only provide for cleaner air but reduce noise pollution and traffic congestion. Given the high cost of gasoline, NEVs provide a more cost-effective means for transportation and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. In addition, electric vehicles such as these are more desirable for transportation within cities. NEVs are currently street-legal in at least 40 states. This bill is modeled after the New Jersey legislation which was signed into law in 2006. The Pennsylvania Automotive Association fully supports this bill. Passage of this measure will allow us to join a majority of states in protecting the environment by providing an alternative to gas or diesel-powered vehicles.

During prior sessions, the Senate Transportation Committee reported this bill from committee.

*If you would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Pat Snively of my office by e-mailing her at [psnively@pasen.gov](mailto:psnively@pasen.gov).*