



HOUSE BILL 959: DOT Proposed Legislative Changes.

2016-2017 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Transportation	Date:	June 15, 2016
Introduced by:	Reps. Iler, Torbett	Prepared by:	Giles Perry and Wendy Ray
Analysis of:	PCS to Third Edition H959-CSSU-47		Committee Counsel

SUMMARY: *House Bill 959 makes various changes to the transportation and motor vehicles laws of the State.*

The Proposed Committee Substitute makes the following changes from the Senate companion bill (Senate Bill 723) heard previously in the Senate Transportation Committee:

- *Changes Sec. 2 – broadband in DOT right-of-way (deletes fee, adds DOT to study fee)*
- *Changes Sec. 2.1 – adds weight limit exemption for construction equipment*
- *Adds Sec. 3.1 – Turnpike Authority to report one-time facility user fees over \$50*
- *Adds Sec. 5.1 – lights or reflective gear required on bicycles at night*
- *Adds Sec. 5.5 – allows vehicles to pass slower bicycles and mopeds, increase penalties for unsafe movements that cause injury to bicyclists, hand signal revisions*
- *Changes Sec. 10 – allows authorization to receive electronic notices from DMV to be in written or electronic format*
- *Adds Sec. 10.5 – provides option on application for registration/certificate of title for joint tenancy with right of survivorship*
- *Adds Sec. 12.5 – revises definition of autocycle*
- *Changes Sec. 13 – defines "electric assisted bicycles" and exempts them from the definition of motor vehicles*
- *Adds Sec. 13.1 – revisions to DMV’s medical review program*
- *Adds Sec. 13.5 – allows use of dealer plates for employees and family members of independent dealers*
- *Adds Sec. 13.8 – law enforcement may provide accident reports to an insurance agents or drivers*
- *Adds Sec. 14 – short-line railroad assistance*

CURRENT LAW AND BILL ANALYSIS:

PART I. DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

Small Transportation Projects/Local Consultation

Section 1. Current law requires the Department of Transportation to consult with local governments affected by a planned transportation project before taking action. However, consultation is not required for small projects with a cost of \$150,000 or less. This section would increase that dollar amount from

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\$150,000 to \$250,000, exempting small projects with a cost of \$250,000 or less from the local consultation requirement.

Broadband and Fiber Optic in DOT Right-of-Way/Fees

Section 2. Current law authorizes DOT to locate and acquire ROW for placement of utility lines operated by regulated public utilities or local governments.

Section 2(a) authorizes DOT to also allow placement of non-utility owned or operated communications or data transmission infrastructure on DOT right-of-way. This section also clarifies that no agreement for use of Department right-of-way shall abrogate the Department's ownership and control of the right of way, and clarifies that DOT can use existing ROW for placement of utilities.

Section 2(b) directs DOT to study the issue of administrative fees for encroachments, and report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee by December 1, 2016.

Section 2 would become effective July 1, 2016.

Weight Limits Applicable to Metal Commodities, Construction Equipment, and Steel Coils, and Extending Certain Federal Weight Exemptions to the State's Highways

Section 2.1. This section makes the following changes:

- Section 2.1(a) authorizes a higher weight limit for vehicles transporting metal commodities or construction equipment: up to 22,000 lbs. single axle and 42,000 lbs. tandem axle; maximum gross weight 90,000 lbs.
- Section 2.1(a) also extends additional federal weight allowances for natural gas powered vehicles, emergency vehicles, heavy duty towing vehicles, and vehicles with idle reduction technology, currently applicable only to interstate highways in the State, to all State roads, except for posted bridges or roads, or unless specifically prohibited by NC DOT.
- Section 2.1(b) authorizes DOT to issue an overweight or overwidth permit for the transport of up to three steel coils on one truck or for multiple pieces of construction equipment on one truck.

This section would become effective October 1, 2016.

PART II. NORTH CAROLINA TURNPIKE AUTHORITY

Allow Electronic Billing for Tolls

Section 3. Current law authorizes Turnpike Authority toll bills to be sent by first class mail. This section would authorize the Turnpike Authority to send bills for tolls via electronic mail, rather than by first-class mail, if the registered owner or person who had custody of the vehicle consents in writing.

Turnpike Authority Report on One-Time Facility User Fees

Section 3.1. This section requires the Authority to report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee the number of one-time toll facility users who are charged more than \$50 in penalties and fees. The Authority would also be required to include in its first report proposed statutory changes that would have the effect of improving efficiency and reducing the possibility of charges over \$50 for those users.

Repeal NCTA Semiannual Reports to JLTOC

Section 4. Current law requires the Turnpike Authority submit semi-annual reports, and more frequent reports if requested, on its activities to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee. This

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section would repeal that requirement. The Authority would continue to be required by statute to submit annual reports on its activities to the General Assembly.

PART III. DIVISION OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION

Repeal requirement to Maintain Off-Road Cycling Records

Section 5. Current law requires that notice of State land restricted or removed from use by bicyclists be filed with the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation of the Department of Transportation. This section repeals that requirement. Also, this section repeals the requirement that the Division keep records of State lands open and available for use by bicyclists.

Bicycle must have red rear light or operator must wear reflective vest when operated at night

Section 5.1. Current law requires bicycles to have a rear reflector or red light when used at night. This section requires a rear reflector and a red rear light or reflective vest or clothing visible from a distance of at least 300 feet from the rear of a bicycle when operated at night.

Bicycle safety law revisions

Section 5.5. Section 5.5 (a) and (b) authorize passing of a slower moving bicycle or moped, even where passing is otherwise prohibited, if the other requirements of these sections are met. Section 5.5(c) increases the penalties for unsafe traffic movements that cause injury to bicycles, and clarifies the required hand signals for turning and stopping.

This section becomes effective October 1, 2016, and applies to offenses occurring on or after that date.

PART IV. DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Commercial Driver's License Changes

Section 6. This section would amend State commercial driver's license laws to conform with federal requirements as follows:

- Delete a provision allowing the Division of Motor Vehicles to issue a restricted instruction permit to an applicant for certification as a school bus driver.
- Make commercial learner's permits valid for 180 days with no limit on renewal. Currently, permits are valid for 6 months but are limited to one renewal in a two-year period.
- Increase commercial driver's license disqualification periods for convictions of violating out-of-service orders, and require violations to be committed in a commercial motor vehicle.
- Establish statutory authority for the Division to issue intrastate medical waivers to individuals not able to meet federal medical qualification standards for commercial driver's license holders. The waiver would authorize intrastate operation of a commercial motor vehicle subject to regulation by the Division. This is current practice by the Division.

This section would become effective January 1, 2017, and apply to offenses committed on or after that date.

Extend Registration Period for Certain Plates

Section 7. Current law provides that the registration of a motor vehicle renewed by means of a renewal sticker expires at midnight on the last day of the month designated on the sticker. This section provides

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that the registration of a motor vehicle renewed by means other than a renewal sticker (typically a new registration plate) expires at midnight on February 15 of each year. This section would become effective October 1, 2016 and apply to registration renewals on or after that date.

Temporary Driving Certificate Use/Uniformity

Section 8. Current law provides that a temporary driving certificate is valid for 60 days for an applicant seeking a commercial driver's license and 20 days for an applicant seeking a non-commercial driver's license. In addition, current law prohibits the use of a temporary driving certificate for identification purposes. This section sets the period of validity for all temporary driving certificates at 60 days and allows a certificate to be used for identification purposes when conducting business with the DMV. This section would become effective January 1, 2017, and the change to period of validity applies to certificates issued on or after that date.

DMV Driver's License Testing Requirements/Remote Renewal

Section 9 eliminates the current statutory requirement for sign and symbol and vision testing when a person is renewing a driver's license remotely via the internet or at a DMV kiosk. Sign and symbol testing will still be required for initial issuance of a drivers' license, and vision testing will be done for required in-person, in-office renewal. This section would become effective October 1, 2016.

DMV/Electronic Notice

Section 10 Current law authorizes DMV to send notice of vehicle registration renewal by e-mail, if the customer has consented. This section (i) specifies that a person who has provided an e-mail address to DMV shall notify the Division of any change or discontinuance of that e-mail address within 30 days after the change or discontinuance; (ii) clarifies current law limiting disclosure of personal information in DMV motor vehicle records to provide that e-mail addresses provided to DMV are personal information; and (iii) provides that instead of providing notice by personal delivery or United States mail, DMV may give notice for *any* DMV business by e-mail, if the person to be notified has consented to receiving notices via electronic means, and has provided the Division an e-mail address for receiving the notices. This section would become effective October 1, 2016.

DMV to provide option for joint tenancy with right of survivorship on application for registration and certificate of title

Section 10.5. This section requires DMV to place a pre-printed "joint tenancy with right of survivorship" option on its application for a motor vehicle title form. This change would allow vehicles to pass to the surviving owner outside of probate.

DMV/Inspection of Pre-1981 Motor Vehicles/Titling

Section 11. Current law requires DMV to inspect out-of-state vehicles that are 35 years or older prior to issuing an initial NC title for the vehicle. Section 11 changes the requirement to vehicles from the 1980 model year or older. This section would become effective January 1, 2017.

Repeal Signature Requirement/Registration Card

Section 12. Current law makes it an infraction for the owner of a registered motor vehicle to fail to sign their vehicle registration card with pen and ink upon receipt. This section repeals that requirement. This section would become effective December 1, 2016, and apply to registration cards issued on or after that date.

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Revise Definition of "Autocycle"

Section 12.5. This section would amend the definition of an autocycle to include vehicles without an airbag, and with partially enclosed seating within the definition.

Amend Moped Definition

Section 13 establishes a definition for "electric assisted bicycles", and exempts them from the definition of motor vehicles. In addition, this section moves the definition of "moped" to Chapter 20 of the General Statutes, clarifies that the definition includes mopeds powered by electricity or alternative fuel, but does not include motor-driven bicycles or electric assisted bicycles. This section also makes several conforming changes to related statutes.

This section would become effective December 1, 2016, and apply to offenses committed on or after that date.

Revisions to DMV Medical Review Program

Section 13.1 This section makes changes to the DMV medical evaluation program, including clarification of the applicability of the section to include mental disability, procedure for submittal of medical information, appeal procedure, and the composition of the medical review board.

This section becomes effective July 1, 2016.

Allow dealer plates for employees of independent dealers and family members

Section 13.5. This section authorizes use of dealer plates by employees of independent dealers, and by immediate family members of independent dealers and their employees.

Law enforcement to provide accident report to insurer

Section 13.8. This section provides that law enforcement may provide an uncertified copy of an accident report to an insurance agent or driver upon being provided with evidence that a certified copy of the accident report has been requested from the DMV and the applicable fee has been paid.

PART V. RAIL

Short-Line Railroad Assistance

Section 14. Current law provides that dividends from the North Carolina Railroad are to be deposited in the Freight Rail & Rail Crossing Safety Improvement Fund, which is to be used for the enhancement of freight rail service and railroad-roadway crossing safety. This section makes clear that funds from the Freight Rail & Rail Crossing Safety Improvement Fund may be used for short-line railroad projects.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.

BACKGROUND: House Bill 959, as introduced, was recommended by the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee.