

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2013**

Bill Number: H.46 Name of Bill: Motor vehicles; lights; windshield wipers

Agency/ Dept: Vermont State Police Author of Bill Review: SGT. Garry Scott

Date of Bill Review: 01/25/2013 Status of Bill: (check one):

☒ Upon Introduction      ☐ As passed by 1<sup>st</sup> body      ☐ As passed by both bodies      ☐ Fiscal

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**Recommended Position:**

☒ Support      ☐ Oppose      ☐ Remain Neutral      ☐ Support with modifications identified in #8 below

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**Analysis of Bill**

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1. **Summary of bill and issue it addresses.** This bill requires persons operating vehicles on a highway illuminate required lights while windshield wipers are in continuous use.
2. **Is there a need for this bill?** Rain, fog, snow and smoke make it difficult to see the road and other vehicles. Turning on headlights during inclement weather helps to be seen by other traffic, to see the roadway more clearly and reduce motor vehicle collisions.
3. **What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?**  
The intent of this bill is to reduce motor vehicle crashes which would be a fiscal saving measure. There would need to be a media campaign to notify the public of the change in the law. Highway message boards need to notify the public during inclement weather to turn their lights on. "Wipers on? Headlights on!"
4. **What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for other departments in state government, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?** AOT would need to use highway message boards to notify the public. There would be an educational need for law enforcement and the public to be made aware of the law change.
5. **What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?** There would be minimal impact. There could be the possibility of reducing crashes.
6. **Other Stakeholders:**  
  
6.1 **Who else is likely to support the proposal and why?** U.S. Department of Transportation, NHTSA, CDC, Governor's Highway Association, National Safety council, the insurance industry, law enforcement and the American Medical Association.

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**6.2 Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why?** No known organized groups oppose this.

- 7. Rationale for recommendation:** The U.S Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration estimates that there are over 6,301,000 motor vehicle crashes each year. Twenty-four (24) percent of these crashes – approximately 1,511,000 – are weather related. On average, 7,130 people are killed and over 629,000 people are injured in weather related crashes each year. In potentially treacherous weather conditions, it is common sense to make your vehicle as visible as possible. If you driving in low visibility conditions, you are more likely to be seen with your headlights on.
- 8. Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill.** The recommendation would be to remove the “...persons or vehicles on the highway are not clearly discernible at a distance of 500 feet ahead,..” Headlights should be on when the vehicle’s windshield wipers are in continuous or intermittent use because of precipitation or atmospheric moisture, which includes rain, snow, sleet, smoke or mist. It is difficult to estimate with the naked eye what 500 feet is. By making the law more clear, the likelihood that people will turn on their lights drastically increases. If you have your wipers on, your headlights should be on also.

**Secretary/Commissioner has reviewed this document:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_