

CONFIDENTIAL
LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2015

Bill Number: H.172 Name of Bill: Highways; Motor Vehicles; Studded Snow Tires

Agency/Dept: DPS/VSP Author of Bill Sgt. Mark A. Perkins (mark.perkins@state.vt.us)
Review: _____

Date of Bill Review: February 16, 2015 Related Bills and Key Players: _____

Status of Bill: (check one)

☒ Upon Introduction ☐ As passed by 1st body ☐ As passed by both bodies

Recommended Position:

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

Analysis of Bill

1. Summary of bill and issue it addresses. *Describe what the bill is intended to accomplish and why.*

This Bill proposes to prohibit, with certain exceptions, operation of vehicles equipped with studded snow tires on Vermont highways other than from November 20 to April 20.

2. Is there a need for this bill? *Please explain why or why not.*

Yes. Studded snow tires can cause damage to the surface of the roadways or bridges traveled upon and should be limited to winter season use only. Studded tires can help with ice conditions present on the roadway however will not be as useful with snow or wet conditions. Studs under the later conditions may in fact impair the handling/stopping ability of the vehicle.

3. What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?

The Vermont Periodic Inspection Manual would need to be updated and a Vermont Civil Violation Complaint / Traffic Ticket code would need to be created.

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?

Members of VTrans would need to be consulted on the cost of possible roadway/bridge damage caused by the use of studded tires.

5. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it? *(for example, public, municipalities, organizations, business, regulated entities, etc)*

The members of the public will have to decide between buying studded tires versus using a winter/all season tire. If the choice is to use studded tires, there will be a need to have two sets of tires for vehicles for the year. Then there will be additional costs for changing the tires out at the mandated times. Municipalities would better be able to answer the potential of costs in their respective jurisdictions.

6. Other Stakeholders:

6.1 Who else is likely to support the proposal and why?

Those members responsible for the maintenance/upkeep of the roadways/bridges in Vermont.

6.2 Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why?

Unknown

7. Rationale for recommendation: *Justify recommendation stated above.*

The average studded tire is a winter tire that has 60 to 120 small metal studs inserted into it. These studs are made of tough metals like tungsten. The studs are placed in the tire in such a way that even as the tire wears down, the studs maintain a consistent protrusion length. Studded tires for prolonged use in heavy snow and extreme cold typically cost **\$75-\$550** or more each. The Nokian Hakkapeliitta 7 Studded Snow Tire^[2] designed for "Nordic" conditions can cost **\$150-\$500 (\$450-\$2,000** for a set of four) with wheel diameters of 14"-20". The typical prices above do not include wheels. The options are to have one set of wheels and do a semi-annual tire swap (typically about **\$40-\$80** each time for re-mounting and re-balancing four tires) or to have the winter or snow tires permanently mounted on a second set of wheels, making it a relatively simple matter to switch the entire tire-and-wheel-assembly twice a year. A set of wheels can cost **\$120-\$500** or more new for a set of four, or a used set can be as low as **\$40-\$80**. All but seven states, including Vermont have some type of restriction/prohibition on the use of studded tires.

Based upon a 2002 study on Studded Tires in Washington State, the following was concluded,

Studded tires produce their best traction on snow or ice near the freezing mark and lose proportionately more of their tractive ability at lower temperatures than do studless or all-season tires. On bare pavement, studded tires tend to have poorer traction performance than other tire types. Pavement rutting caused by accelerated wear from studded tires can cause the dangerous conditions of tramlining, hydroplaning on accumulated water in the ruts, excessive road spray, and premature damage to pavement markings.

The roughening of ice and pavement from studded tires provides a safety benefit for all vehicles (with and without studs) by helping to prevent formation of smooth, glare ice.

The following is a link to the Washington State Report;

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/research/reports/fullreports/551.1.pdf>

8. Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill: *Not meant to rewrite bill, but rather, an opportunity to identify simple modifications that would change recommended position.*

None

9. Gubernatorial appointments to board or commission?

Secretary/Commissioner has reviewed this document

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Laura Gray", written over a faint circular stamp.

Date: 3/11/15