

**1999 SENATE TRANSPORTATION
SB 2172**

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2172

Senate Transportation Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 15, 1999

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		3,045-End
1		x	Did not record
2-January 21,1999		x	390
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Ann A. Schaeffer</i>			

Minutes:

SENATOR B. STENEHJEM opened the hearing on SB 2172. Committee members present were: Sens. Bob Stenehjem, R. Schobinger, D. Cook, D. Mutch, D. O'Connell, V. Thompson, and Dennis Bercier.

SENATOR SAND testified in support of SB 2172 (see testimony).

SENATOR B. STENEHJEM What's the penalty?

SENATOR SAND There is no penalty.

SENATOR O'CONNELL Do you see this problem solving itself with the new vehicles having daytime lights?

SENATOR SAND Eventually, it will be solved but not completely. This will definitely enhance our safety.

SENATOR O'CONNELL Will the public feel that big brother is shoving another law down our throats?

SENATOR SAND Life is full of don'ts.

SENATOR B. STENEHJEM I understand safety but this bill doesn't address the urban area as much as the highway. Is it as important?

SENATOR SAND I drove to work today and between Boulevard and the Capitol there were five cars with no lights on in the early morning. It is necessary for the urban areas as well.

SENATOR SCHOBINGER Are you concerned with the fact that there is no penalty and so passing this would be unenforceable? How can we enforce it with no penalty?

SENATOR SAND I don't have a good answer, but we coped with that problem on seat belts and struggled through that. If we raise traffic fines the people will say you're just trying to raise money.

SENATOR O'CONNELL Do you see this bill as an excuse for probable cause meaning the police could pull anyone over at any time?

SENATOR SAND I don't look on our law officers as being belligerent.

SENATOR O'CONNELL I'm looking at the public perception. They may think that this is another tool of checking for DUI or other instances.

SENATOR SAND I usually vote for what is in the best interest as my constituents. They may not always see it but I try to do the best I can.

SENATOR B. STENEHJEM Is there any more testimony in support of SB 2172? Is there any testimony on a neutral position?

MARK BETHKE, HIGHWAY PATROL DEPARTMENT testified in a neutral position for SB 2172 (see testimony).

SENATOR B. STENEHJEM Under this law, even owners of GMC vehicles would have to turn their headlights on because running lights do not count in this bill.

MARK BETHKE That is correct. Some of the daytime running lights are incorporated in the headlights and some are separate features.

SENATOR B. STENEHJEM Usually, the higher the penalty means the larger the reduction. Is there a law that doesn't have a penalty?

MARK BETHKE It is rare. Now, there is a \$20.00 fine for those who don't drive with their lights on when it's required.

SENATOR COOK How many other states have this law? Are there any signs at the borders?

MARK BETHKE I'm not aware of any.

SENATOR COOK If there is no penalty, shouldn't it be the same during the day as it is at night?

SENATOR B. STENEHJEM You may be right.

SENATOR SCHOBINGER Does it concern you that this will become unenforceable because there is no penalty?

MARK BETHKE There would have to be a large educational effort if there is no penalty.

SENATOR O'CONNELL Are motorcycles mandated to have their lights on during the day?

MARK BETHKE They are not mandated to have their lights on but now they are manufactured that way.

SENATOR O'CONNELL Is there a reason why law enforcement does not always drive with their lights on all of the time?

MARK BETHKE There is no reason, but there are certain times when we do.

SENATOR O'CONNELL We have all of these flashing lights in our society today. With our lights on during the day, is it possible we could become immune to them?

MARK BETHKE I don't know.

SENATOR BERCIER How long was the education process when we passed the seat belt law?

MARK BETHKE For six months there were no traffic violations issued.

SENATOR BERCIER Was there a fiscal note for the signs that tell you to wear a seat belt?

MARK BETHKE Yes.

SENATOR BERCIER Wouldn't there be a fiscal note for this?

MARK BETHKE That is not required.

SENATOR B. STENEHJEM Is there any other testimony? If not we'll close the hearing on SB 2172.

January 21, 1999 Tape 2, #390

SENATOR O'CONNELL motioned for a Do Not Pass on SBA 2172.

SENATOR SCHOBINGER seconded that motion.

SENATOR THOMPSON The Highway Patrol information lays the statistics out there for us.

SENATOR COOK Remember there would be a fine for those who do not have their lights on; it would be the same fine that is used for those who do not have their lights on after dark.

A roll call vote was taken (6 Yeas, 0 Nays, and 1 Absent and Not Voting).

SENATOR SCHOBINGER will carry SB 2172.

Date: January 21, 1999
Roll Call Vote #: 1

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2172

Senate Transportation Committee

Subcommittee on _____
or
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Not Pass

Motion Made By Senator O'Connell Seconded By Senator Schobinger

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Sen. B. Stenejem-Chairman	X				
Sen. R. Schobinger-V. Chair	X				
Sen. Duane Mutch					
Sen. Dwight Cook	X				
Sen. David O'Connell	X				
Sen. Vern Thompson	X				
Sen. Dennis Bercier	X				

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Senator Schobinger

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
January 22, 1999 11:38 a.m.

Module No: SR-14-1027
Carrier: Schobinger
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2172: Transportation Committee (Sen. B. Stenehjem, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2172 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

1999 TESTIMONY

SB 2172

SB 2172

DAYTIME DRIVING LIGHTS

The purpose of this bill is added safety.

Have you ever left a well-lit area on the way out of town and met a car with no lights on?

Have you ever met a vehicle in adverse weather conditions without any lights?

Have you ever met a vehicle long after sundown without lights?

Vehicles even more than a mile away are noticed when driving lights are on. I find this very important, particularly on two lane roads.

People call this "the dead battery bill". I remember only once that I had a dead battery from leaving my lights on and I consider myself average.

Daytime driving lights are now standard equipment on many new vehicles and large tractor trucks.

Many of today's newer vehicles have alarms that sound when lights are left on.

An "after market" daylight switch is available for less than \$30 for those of us who can't remember to switch off our

● lights.

I try to drive with my lights on in the daytime because I want to be noticed by uncoming traffic. Could it be that I am selfish and want the added safety for my family and myself?

Testimony on Senate Bill 2172
Mark L Bethke, Safety and Education Officer,
North Dakota Highway Patrol

Pro

- Reduction in multiple vehicle crashes (indicated by several studies)
- Easier to see vehicles in low light conditions, shade, dusk
- Easier to see vehicles in glare
- They grab your attention quicker (the human eye is light-seeking, drivers will see an on-coming vehicle sooner and make a more accurate estimate of its rate of approach)

Con

- They are annoying (constant distraction in the rear-view mirror)
- Glare produced from headlights
- Hard to see turn signals
- Out-of-pocket expenses (lights, fuel, initial vehicle cost increases)
- Change lights more often, concern of more vehicles at night with burned out lights

- Dead battery
- Masking affect (drivers of vehicles in a passing situation are more likely to miss an oncoming vehicle without headlights on if it were surrounded by vehicles that had headlights on)

North Dakota Traffic Crashes for 1997

Data was taken from the North Dakota Vehicle Crash Facts for 1997 provided by the Drivers License and Traffic Safety Division, North Dakota Department of Transportation

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DAYTIME RUNNING LIGHTS Q&A: General

Daytime running lights (DRLs) are a crash avoidance feature new to vehicles sold in America, but they've been used for years in Canada and Scandinavia. DRLs help prevent crashes by making vehicles more conspicuous. U.S. law now permits but does not require DRLs, which turn on automatically when the ignition is started and are overridden when regular headlights are activated. DRLs typically are high-beam headlamps at reduced intensity or low-beam headlamps at full or reduced power. Tail lamps and/or turn signals also may be lit. In some vehicles, turn signals alone function as DRLs, especially when the headlamps are hidden.

1. [What are the safety advantages of DRLs?](#)
2. [How effective are DRLs?](#)
3. [Where are DRLs required?](#)
4. [Are DRLs available on vehicles in the United States?](#)
5. [Why has it taken so long to introduce DRLs in the United States?](#)
6. [Will DRLs be effective in the United States?](#)
7. [Will DRLs shorten headlamp bulb life or lower fuel economy?](#)
8. [Will motorists be bothered by glare?](#)
9. [Are motorcycles required to have DRLs?](#)

1. Daytime running lights are a low-cost method to reduce crashes. They are especially effective in preventing daytime head-on and front-corner collisions by increasing vehicle conspicuity and making it easier to detect approaching vehicles from farther away.
2. Nearly all published reports indicate DRLs reduce multiple-vehicle daytime crashes. Evidence about DRL effects on crashes comes from studies conducted in Scandinavia, Canada, and the United States. A study examining the effect of Norway's DRL law from 1980 to 1990, found a 10 percent decline in daytime multiple-vehicle crashes. A Danish study reported a 7 percent reduction in DRL-relevant crashes in the first 15 months after DRL use was required and a 37 percent decline in left-turn crashes. In a second study covering two years and 9 months of Denmark's law, there was a 6 percent reduction in daytime multiple-vehicle crashes and a 34 percent reduction in left-turn crashes. A 1994 Transport Canada study comparing 1990 model year vehicles with DRLs to 1989 vehicles without them, found that DRLs reduced relevant daytime multiple-vehicle crashes by 11 percent.

In the United States, a 1985 Institute study determined that commercial fleet passenger vehicles modified to operate with DRLs were involved in 7 percent fewer daytime multiple-vehicle crashes than similar vehicles without DRLs. A small-scale fleet study conducted in the 1960s found an 18 percent lower daytime multiple-vehicle crash rate for DRL-equipped vehicles. Multiple-vehicle daytime crashes account for about half of all police-reported crashes in the United States.

3. Laws in Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden require vehicles to operate with lights on during the daytime. There are two types of laws. Canada's requires vehicles to be equipped with DRLs. The other type of law — in effect in Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden — requires motorists to turn on their headlights if their vehicles do not have automatic DRLs. This kind of law applies to drivers only, and vehicles do not have to be specially equipped. In 1972, Finland mandated daytime running lights in winter on rural roads and a decade later made DRLs mandatory year-round. Sweden's law took effect in 1977, Norway's in 1986, Iceland's in 1988, and Denmark's in 1990. Hungary has required drivers on rural roads to operate with vehicle lights on since 1993. Canada requires DRLs for vehicles made after December 1, 1989. No U.S. state mandates DRLs, although some require drivers to operate vehicles with lights on in bad weather.
4. Offered on a handful of 1995 domestic and foreign model passenger cars, pickups, and sport utility vehicles, daytime running lights are becoming a more common feature. They're standard on all 1998 GM, Saab, Suzuki, Volkswagen, and Volvo models, as well as the Toyota Corolla. They are optional on the 1998 Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable. GM offers retrofit DRL kits for vehicles that don't already have DRLs. The kits can be used on non-GM models, as well.
5. Some state lighting laws inadvertently prohibited DRLs until the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) agreed to permit automakers to offer them on vehicles sold in all 50 states. This action, which preempted the state laws, followed a petition filed by General Motors. The Institute had filed a similar petition based on studies showing that DRLs are an inexpensive way to reduce daytime collisions between vehicles. After initially granting this petition, NHTSA terminated rulemaking in 1988, saying that the matter wasn't clearly a national safety issue and that auto manufacturers "tended to oppose, rather than support, the

proposal." NHTSA then changed course again, approving DRLs in 1993.

6. Countries where DRLs are required generally have lower levels of ambient light during winter and longer periods of dusk and dawn than the United States. Although studies have indicated that DRLs have reduced crashes in North America and Scandinavia, the impact they will have on U.S. crashes has not been fully determined since DRLs have been used only on a limited basis here. Positive effects found in Canada's evaluation of DRLs are important because most of Canada's population is at a lower latitude than Scandinavia. Also, American DRLs are brighter than European DRLs. This should increase visual contrast between vehicles and their backgrounds despite brighter daylight conditions.
7. Running vehicle lights in the daytime does not significantly shorten bulb life. Systems like those on General Motors cars that use high beams are designed to operate at half their normal power during daylight hours, thereby conserving energy and reducing the effect on a vehicle's fuel economy. NHTSA estimates that only a fraction of a mile per gallon will be lost, depending on the type of system used. General Motors estimates the cost to be about \$3 per year for the average driver. Transport Canada estimates the extra annual fuel and bulb replacement costs to be \$3-15 for systems using reduced-intensity headlights or other low-intensity lights and more than \$40 a year for DRL systems using regular low-beam headlights.
8. In most countries mandating DRLs, glare has not been an issue. However, some motorists in the United States have complained that the systems here are too bright. In response to these complaints, NHTSA has proposed reducing the maximum allowable light intensity from 7,000 to 1,500 candela, a value more in line with European DRLs.
9. Federal law does not require motorcycles to have DRLs, although all manufacturers voluntarily equip their cycles with such lights. Some states including California require the lights, and 22 states require motorcyclists to ride with their headlights on at all hours.

Q&A Topic List



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News :

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 3, 1998

NHTSA 39-98

Contact: Tim Hurd

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NHTSA Proposes Reduced Glare From Daytime Running Lights In Motor Vehicles

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) today proposed changes to the vehicle safety standards for lighting to reduce the problem of glare from some daytime running lamps (DRLs).

"Safety is President Clinton's highest transportation priority," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater. "The improved ability to be seen provided by daytime running lights is possible without annoying and unnecessary glare."






NHTSA is proposing a three-step solution. The first step is to require that DRLs based on upper beam headlights be reduced in intensity by more than half in newly manufactured vehicles beginning one year after the final rule. Two years after the final rule, lower beam DRLs on newly manufactured vehicles would be limited to about half the currently-permitted intensity. Finally, four years after the final rule, DRLs on all newly manufactured vehicles would be limited to about one quarter of the intensity of today's brightest DRLs.

"These changes are a response to hundreds of complaints from the public about glare from these optional devices," said NHTSA Administrator Ricardo Martinez, M.D. "Older drivers should be particularly pleased with the proposed change because their eyes tend to be more sensitive to glare."

General Motors, Saab, Volkswagen and Volvo all provide DRLs as standard equipment on their vehicles. The change is in line with DRL intensities established in Europe, and, depending on the hardware chosen by the vehicle manufacturer, is compatible with Canada's mandatory DRL rule.



CRASHES BY LIGHT CONDITIONS

Light Condition	Total Crashes	Fatal Crashes	Injury Crashes
 Daylight	10,474 or 62.9%	40	2,787
 Dawn	429 or 2.6%	5	70
 Dusk	624 or 3.7%	6	112
 Darkness	2,087 or 12.5%	5	504
 Darkness	3,048 or 18.3%	33	511
TOTALS	16,662	89	3,984

CRASHES BY MANNER OF COLLISION

NUMBER OF CRASHES

Manner of Collision	Total				Single Vehicle Crashes				Multiple Vehicle Crashes			
	Total	Fatal	Injury	Damage	Total	Fatal	Injury	Damage	Total	Fatal	Injury	Damage
Angle	6,039	19	1,547	4,473	1	-	-	1	6,037	19	1,547	4,471
Rear End	2,828	3	855	1,970	1	-	1	-	2,827	3	854	1,970
Head On	486	16	167	303	2	-	1	1	484	16	166	302
Sideswipe (same dir.)	925	-	71	854	-	-	-	-	925	-	71	854
Sideswipe (opp. dir.)	326	2	42	282	2	-	-	2	324	2	42	280
Rear to Rear	62	-	6	56	-	-	-	-	62	-	6	58
Non-Coll. w/Motor Veh.	4,098	49	1,296	2,753	3,938	44	1,180	2,714	160	5	116	39
Animal w/Motor Veh.	1,898	-	-	1,898	1,898	-	-	1,898	-	-	-	-
Totals	16,662	89	3,984	12,589	5,842	44	1,182	4,616	10,819	45	2,802	7,974

NUMBER OF PERSONS INVOLVED

	Total	Fatalities	Incapacitating Injury	Evident Injury	Possible Injury	No Injury
Angle	16,886	25	221	763	1,368	14,509
Rear End	8,408	3	53	266	968	7,118
Head On	1,307	23	51	121	155	957
Sideswipe (same dir.)	2,349	-	17	29	57	2,246
Sideswipe (opp. dir.)	833	2	12	24	41	754
Rear to Rear	119	-	2	2	3	112
Non-Coll. w/Motor Veh.	6,480	52	259	766	720	4,683
Animal w/Motor Veh.	1,898	-	-	-	-	1,898
Totals	38,280	105	615	1,971	3,312	32,277