

Senate Transportation Committee

Kat Bourque 271-3093

SB 180-FN, including low digit number plates as vanity plates.

Hearing Date: January 31, 2017

Time Opened: 1:40 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:56 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Birdsell, Gannon and Ward

Members of the Committee Absent : Senators Watters and McGilvray

Bill Analysis : This bill includes low digit number plates as vanity plates.

Sponsors :

Sen. Feltes

Rep. Cushing

Who supports the bill: Senator Feltes, Representative Cushing.

Who opposes the bill: Dan Bennett (NH Auto Dealers)

Who is neutral on the bill: Elizabeth Bielecki (DOS), Chris Ialuna (DOS)

Summary of testimony presented in support :

Senator Feltes

Prime Sponsor

- This bill includes low digit number plates as vanity plates.
- Any number plate, regardless of vehicle or plate type, which bears numbers in 4 digits or less, shall be subject to this section of the law.
- Currently, all vanity plates cost \$40 more per year.
- Senator Feltes has heard from constituents who pay the vanity fee who do not think it is fair that individuals who have low number plates do not also pay a fee.
- Senator Feltes stated that in the concept of fairness, this loophole in the system should be closed.
- When this bill was brought in last session, there was an escalating fee depending on how low the number was. Many did not like that. This year, it is a flat fee of \$40.00.
- Regarding the fiscal note, this will incur costs for the DOT.
- Senator Birdsell asked why the plate needs to be 4 digits or less and not 5 or 3. Senator Feltes stated that 5 digits are not considered to be low number plates. 4 digits and under are considered to be low digit plates by the general public.
- Senator Gannon asked how many low digit plates are requested versus given out. Senator Feltes stated that, based on last year's fiscal note, 92 plates were in use

from 0-99, from 100-999, 865 plates were in use, and from 1000-9999, there were 7,014 plates in use. He does not know how these are issued.

- Senator Ward stated that she has a five digit plate and got it several years ago without asking for it at the DMV.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition :

Dan Bennett
NHADA

- Mr. Bennett added that the NHADA is concerned with the lack of clarity in this bill as to which types of plates this legislation would apply to.
- This is a concern that he would request the committee address before choosing to pass the bill.

Neutral Information Presented:

Elizabeth Bielecki and Chris Ialuna
Department of Safety

- The Department takes no position on this bill but is here to answer questions and provide additional testimony.
- It is unclear if the intent of the bill is to limit the fee to control number plates, which are 1-5 digits in length. These must be requested. Anything between 1-4 digits is approved by the Commissioner. The Department believes that this applies to any vehicle or license type, including special commercial vehicles, motorcycles, etc. This is why the fiscal note is more significant than last year, since last year's bill was just limited to passenger vehicles.
- Anything with a 5 digit sequence would not be applicable under this bill.
- There was a question whether dealer plates would be involved in this, and DOS believes that they will be, if they are four digits or less.
- Since 5 digit plates are controlled plates, Ms. Bielecki is simply look to clarify if the committee wishes to expand it to 5 digits as well and if they want the bill to apply to all plate types.

Future Action: Pending