

SB 352 -- EMERGENCY VEHICLES

SPONSOR: Clemens (Ruzicka)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on General Laws by a vote of 7 to 0.

Currently, drivers must yield the right-of-way upon the immediate approach of certain emergency vehicles with an audible siren or with at least one lighted lamp exhibiting red light visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of 500 feet. This bill adds any vehicle operated by a conservation agent as an emergency vehicle for which drivers must yield the right-of-way.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that reviews by the Department of Conservation's legal staff indicate its vehicles are emergency vehicles if acting in an official capacity. The bill clarifies that the department vehicles are emergency vehicles. Conservation officials who operate the vehicles are fully commissioned peace officers that often serve as a county sheriff or deputy sheriff's only backup. Allowing their classification as emergency vehicles also reduces the state's risk of liability.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Clemens; and Department of Conservation.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.