



House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section  
Olds Plaza Building, 10th Floor  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
Phone: 517/373-6466

## SNOWMOBILE REGISTRATION NOS.

### House Bill 4522 (Substitute H-2) First Analysis (5-15-97)

**Sponsor: Rep. Bill Bobier**  
**Committee: Conservation, Environment  
and Recreation**

#### ***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

Under Part 821 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), which provides for the registration and regulation of snowmobiles, a person who has been issued a snowmobile certificate of registration must attach the registration decal to each side of the front half of the snowmobile. (These provisions originated in Public Act 99 of 1994, and were subsequently recodified into the NREPA.) Unfortunately, these new snowmobile registration decals are not highly visible, making it difficult to readily identify a snowmobile that has been or is being operated improperly or illegally.

It has been noted that prior to the enactment of Public Act 99 of 1994, snowmobile owners were required to display their snowmobile's identification numbers either by painting or permanently attaching them to the front of a snowmobile in distinctly visible and legible letters of at least three inches in height. Although most snowmobilers use their vehicles appropriately, there are some whose operation of these vehicles leaves much to be desired. Without readily visible identification numbers, it is difficult for anyone who observes the snowmobiler trespassing or otherwise violating the law, including Department of Natural Resources officers, to identify the snowmobile.

#### ***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) specifies that the registration decal assigned to a snowmobile must be attached in a permanent manner to each side of the forward half of the vehicle. House Bill 4522 would amend the act to specify a different method of displaying registration numbers. The bill would require a snowmobile owner who has been issued a registration certificate to paint on or attach the snowmobile's assigned registration number on the belly pan of the snowmobile immediately in front of the footwell. The registration number would have to be displayed reading from left to right, in characters of good proportion, at least three inches in height. In addition, the numbers would have to contrast so as to be distinctly visible and legible. The owner would also be

required to attach the snowmobile's current registration decal to the right of the registration number. In addition, the bill would prohibit a number other than the one awarded to the snowmobile on the registration certificate, or granted reciprocity under the act, from being attached or otherwise displayed on the snowmobile.

MCL 324.82113

#### ***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no fiscal impact on either the state or local units of government. (5-14-97)

#### ***ARGUMENTS:***

##### ***For:***

Before the 1994 legislation, statute required that snowmobile registration numbers be either painted on or otherwise permanently attached to the front of a snowmobile in three-inch, distinctly visible letters. This requirement was deleted under Public Act 99 of 1994 as a concession to those snowmobilers who maintained that such letters mar the vehicle's appearance. At the time, the alternative -- that of requiring snowmobile license plates similar to those required for automobiles -- was deemed too expensive. However, it has become obvious that the public must have some means of identifying these vehicles. In particular, the lack of identifying numbers has provoked complaints from property owners concerning snowmobiles that are illegally driven across their property; property owners cannot file complaints against trespassers if the snowmobiles bear no visible identifying numbers, since there is no way to identify them. The bill's requirements would standardize snowmobile identification and enable law enforcement officers and others to more easily identify snowmobiles, leading to greater ease of enforcement and greater accountability, which may deter some snowmobilers from operating the vehicles in violation of the law.

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***Against:***

Since DNR officers can only issue tickets to snowmobilers for violations that the officer observed, whether members of the public are better able to identify an improperly operated snowmobile is irrelevant. Furthermore, because the adhesives used to affix the numbers can wear out or simply not properly adhere, numbers can fall off without the owner's knowledge.

***POSITIONS:***

The Michigan Snowmobile Association supports the bill.  
(5-14-97)

The Michigan Townships Association supports the bill.  
(5-14-97)

Analyst: W. Flory

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.