



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

OCT 08 1990
Mich. State Law Library

Manufacturer's Bank Building, 12th Floor
Lansing, Michigan 48909
Phone: 517/373-6466

PICKUP CAMPER TITLES

House Bill 5418 as enrolled
Second Analysis (7-16-90)

Sponsor: Rep. Curtis Hertel
House Committee: Transportation
**Senate Committee: State Affairs, Tourism, and
Transportation**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Michigan's many opportunities for outdoor recreational activities — whether its swimming, boating, camping, or even just touring — may explain the interest many people have in owning a "pickup camper," which is generally a non-motorized camping or recreational vehicle without wheels that rests on the back end of a pickup truck. These vehicles are not currently required to have a certificate of title under the Michigan Vehicle Code, although most manufacturers of this type of RV issue a type of serial number with every vehicle manufactured. This number can be useful to banks and other financial institutions to locate the original purchaser of an RV (when a purchase is financed) who defaults on making scheduled payments, and apparently is useful to law enforcement agencies for identifying stolen vehicles. Unfortunately, the number may be forgotten or a copy of it discarded by vehicle owners, making identification in many instances difficult, if not impossible. Some people feel requiring a certificate of title for this type of RV could help in their identification by both law enforcement agencies and financial institutions.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to specify that pickup campers would be subject to the act's certificate of title provisions. A "pickup camper" would be defined as a nonself-propelled recreational vehicle, without wheels for road use, that was designed to rest its weight entirely on, and be attached to, a motor vehicle, and was primarily intended for use as temporary living quarters in connection with recreational, camping, or travel purposes. A pickup camper would not include truck covers or caps that consist of walls and a roof but do not have floors and facilities for using the camper as a dwelling.

Under the bill, a certificate of registration would not be needed for a pickup camper, but a certificate of title would be required for a pickup camper purchased after January 1, 1991. If a camper did not have a manufacturer's serial number, a number would have to be assigned to it by the secretary of state; that number would have to appear on the certificate of title application for the vehicle and on the vehicle itself. (This provision currently applies only to trailer coaches.) Also, a pickup camper manufactured for sale in Michigan after January 1, 1991 would have to have a manufacturer's identification number permanently affixed to its door.

The bill also would require a pickup camper to be attached to a motor vehicle in such a way that the registration plate of the motor vehicle was clearly visible. Provisions in the act that specify the types of lamps and reflectors required for trailers and semitrailers, and their proper location on the vehicle, also would apply to pickup campers. Finally,

language within the act which requires a first lien to be recorded on a purchase transaction made between a buyer, seller, and lender would be clarified. The bill would take effect January 1, 1991.

MCL 257.210 et al.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Senate Fiscal Agency, the bill would have a minimal impact on the state and no fiscal impact on local units of government. The Department of State estimates that approximately 1,000 campers would be titled each year for a fee of \$10.50. Thus, total revenue generated by the bill would be \$10,500. Administrative costs would be minimal. (4-9-90)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would require owners of pickup campers to obtain a certificate of title for their vehicles after January 1, 1991, which could help both the police and financial institutions better identify an RV and its owner. While a manufacturer may issue a serial number to a pickup camper, the owner of the vehicle may not be aware of the number or may discard it accidentally. By requiring that all of these types of RVs be titled by the state, the bill would make it illegal to remove a serial number and would provide the public easy access to the number for ID purposes. Boats, trailer campers, and most other types of vehicles are now required to have a certificate of title. Revenues generated by the title fees would be used for various transportation needs, and by the Department of State to offset the costs of its administrative duties under the bill.

Against:

The bill is unnecessary since most of these vehicles already have a serial number issued to them by their manufacturers. Requiring a state certificate of title would not necessarily help in identifying these vehicles either by the police or for repossession purposes by financial institutions. Other similar types of recreational vehicles (i.e. boats, trailer campers) that require titling are markedly different from pickup campers since these are hitched to, and pulled behind, a motor vehicle and can easily be unhitched and stolen. Pickup campers, on the other hand, rest on and are secured to a pickup truck and become part of the truck itself. A person wishing to steal one either must take the truck with it or lift the camper off the truck without being noticed.