

**SFA**

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Fiscal Agency

Lansing, Michigan 48909

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House Bill 5418 (Substitute H-2 as reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Representative Curtis Hertel

House Committee: Transportation

Senate Committee: State Affairs, Tourism, and Transportation

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Date Completed: 4-9-90

**RATIONALE**

Michigan's many opportunities for outdoor recreational activities--whether swimming, boating, camping, or even just touring--may explain the interest many people seem to have in owning a "pickup camper", which is generally a nonmotorized camping or recreational vehicle (RV) that rests on the back end of a pickup truck. Reportedly, there are about 25,000 of this type of vehicle owned and used by State citizens. These vehicles currently are not required to be registered or 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 who defaults on making scheduled payments, and apparently is useful to law enforcement agencies for identifying stolen vehicles. The number may be forgotten or a copy of it discarded by vehicle owners, however, making identification in many instances difficult, if not impossible. Some people feel that requiring a certificate of title and registration for these RVs could help in their identification both by law enforcement agencies and by financial institutions.

**CONTENT**

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to specify that pickup campers would be subject to the Code's registration and certificate of title provisions. "Pickup camper" would mean a nonself-propelled recreational vehicle,

without wheels for road use, that is designed to rest all of its weight upon, and be attached to, a motor vehicle, and is 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.

Specifically, the bill provides that a certificate of registration would not have to be obtained for a pickup camper, but a certificate of title would be required for a pickup camper purchased after January 1, 1991. If a pickup camper did not have a manufacturer's serial number, a number would have to be assigned to it by the Secretary of State and 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.) Further, 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 the motor vehicle in such a way that the registration plate of the motor vehicle was clearly visible. Provisions in the Code 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.

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camper off the truck.

The bill would take effect January 1, 1991.

MCL 257.216 et al.

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### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have a minimal fiscal impact on the State and no fiscal impact on local units of government. According to the Department of State, approximately 1,000 campers would be titled each year for a fee of \$10.50. Therefore, total revenue collected under this bill would be \$10,500. Administrative costs would be minimal.

### **ARGUMENTS**

#### **Supporting Argument**

The bill would require owners of pickup campers to obtain a certificate of title and registration 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 registered by the State, the bill would make it illegal to remove a registration number and would provide the public with easy access to the number for identification purposes. Boats, trailer camper, and most other types of vehicles are now required to have a certificate of title and registration.

#### **Opposing Argument**

The bill is unnecessary since most of these vehicles already have a serial number issued to them by their manufacturers. Requiring a State registration number and certificate of title would not necessarily help in the identification of these vehicles either by the police or for repossession purposes by financial institutions. Other similar types of recreational vehicles (i.e., boats and trailer campers) that require registration are markedly different from pickup campers since the other types 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

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