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HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date Referred: January 30, 1991

FURTHER REFERRALS: Health, Education and Social Services Finance

Date of Committee Action: 2/7/91

The TRANSPORTATION Committee considered:

HB 85

HOUSE BILL NO. 85

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY EQUIPMENT

"An Act relating to equipment required on a school bus; and providing for an effective date."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

be replaced with CS HB 85 [] the same title [x] a new title

[] have attached amendments(s)

[x] do pass

[] do not pass

[] no recommendations

[] individual recommendations

[] additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s): (Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

[x] fiscal impact D.O.F.

[] fiscal note(s)

[] zero fiscal note

[] zero fiscal note(s)

SIGNING DO PASS:

SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

	Check appropriate column:	Do Not Pass	No Rec	Amend
<i>Jim M...</i>				
<i>Paul Phillips</i>				
<i>Kevin L. Gorman</i>				
<i>Ernie Medina</i>				
<i>Bill Hudson</i>				
<i>Richard Storey</i>				

Richard Storey
Chairman's Signature

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1991 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB85

Revision Date: 2/21/91 Department Affected: Education
Title: Equipment required on a school bus BRU: K-12 Support
Component: Pupil Transportation

Sponsor: Navarre

Requestor: House Transportation COMPONENT SERIAL NO.

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Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	173.7	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	173.7	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year impact: None

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

See attached

Prepared By: Romayne Kareen Phone: 465-2865
Division: Education Finance & Support Date: 2/21/91

Approved by Commissioner: Steve Hole, Acting Commissioner
Agency: Education Date: 2/21/91

Distribution (by preparer): Legislative Finance, Legislative Sponsor, Requestor, OMB, & Impacted Agency(ies).

This fiscal note is updated to reflect revised estimates provided to the department by school districts for the number of Stop Arm Strobes needed under HB85.

Roof Mount Strobes:
630 buses X \$175 = \$110,250

Stop Arm Strobes:
423 buses X \$150 = \$63,450

Total estimated FY92 cost: \$173,700

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: HB 85

BY REPRESENTATIVE NAVARRE

Page 1, line 1, following "to":

Insert "strobe light"

IV. Amendment to HB 85

1. Anchorage has asked for a "grandfathering clause" to exclude some of their current fleet of buses. Approximately 50 of their buses have roof strobes that are located in the center of their buses. These buses would be phased out as new buses are purchased.



ALASKA SCHOOL BUS SAFETY COMMITTEE

February 5, 1991

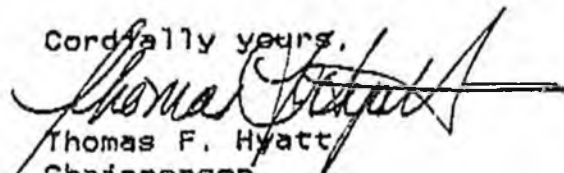
Representative Mike Navarre
P.O. Box V, Room 515
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Sir:

The Alaska School Bus Safety Committee strongly supports House Bill 85, an act requiring school bus stop arms with alternating red strobe lights and a roof mounted white strobe light. The Safety Committee has researched and evaluated aspects of both strobe light systems and found them very effective in the visibility enhancement of school buses during Alaska's inclement weather. Alaska's unique and varied weather conditions severely limit visibility of school buses during their most vulnerable period, the loading and unloading of students.

It is also imperative that the Legislature supply the funding for these projects. Currently, school districts throughout the State are having their pupil transportation reimbursement funds prorated by the Department of Education due to funding short falls. The proposed budget by the Governor suggests further reductions in pupil transportation reimbursement funds. Additionally, school bus operators throughout the State are suffering the effects of extraordinary high fuel costs with no relief from these expenses. It would be unfair to ask either the Districts or Bus Operators to shoulder the expense for these items.

Cordially yours,



Thomas F. Hyatt
Chairperson

TFH/ec

Tom



ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pupil Transportation

3580 East Tudor Road

Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Area Code 907 - 583-3022

FAX 907-562-3957

February 4, 1991

Representative Mike Navarre
Alaska House of Representatives
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811
FAX 465-2278

Dear Representative Navarre,

The Anchorage School District believes that the addition of red strobe lights to the stop arm and white strobe lights to the roof of school buses will enhance school bus safety. All buses in our District, as well as Contracted bus fleets, have been equipped with red strobe lights on the stop arm since September 1989. The addition of these strobe lights has significantly reduced the number of motorists who pass stopped school buses. We also feel that the addition of roof mounted white strobe lights will further increase the visibility of school buses and increase the awareness of the presence of school buses with the general motoring public. Approximately 60% of the fleet have already been equipped with roof mounted strobe lights. The District made roof mounted strobe lights mandatory in our current transportation contracts. After the buses were delivered and began operating the Anchorage Police Department notified me that these lights were illegal and school bus drivers using the lights would be issued citations (see attached letter).

The Anchorage School District would support passage of House Bill 85 if the bill not only mandates installation of white roof mounted strobe lights, but also addresses use of the lights. I would also like to see an exception made on the location of the lights that are already installed. The Anchorage School District has almost fifty buses that have strobe lights mounted in the center of the roof.

Thank you for the interest that you have shown in school bus safety issues. If you need any additional information feel free to contact me at 563-3022.

Sincerely,

Steven Kalnes
Director of Transportation Services



NEA-ALASKA

AFFILIATED WITH THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

ANCHORAGE REGIONAL OFFICE

1411 W 33RD AVENUE
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503
(907) 274-0536

JUNEAU OFFICE

105 MUNICIPAL WAY, SUITE 302
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
(907) 586-3090

FAIRBANKS REGIONAL OFFICE

2118 CUSHMAN STREET
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701
(907) 456-4435

February 1, 1991

Rep. Mike Navarre
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Rep. Navarre:

NEA-Alaska appreciates and supports your desire to improve school bus safety. It is very important that the safety of our children remain paramount and your legislation appears to meet those needs. If we can be of any assistance please let us know.

Sincerely,

Don Oberg
President



FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 71250 Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1250 (907) 452-2000



February 1, 1991

Representative Navarre
PO Box V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Navarre:

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my support for your efforts, through House Bill 85, to require strobe lights on school buses.

I am currently the transportation coordinator for the FNSB School District, a position I have held for the past 10 years. I have also been a member of the Alaska delegation to the 1985 and 1990 Conferences on National Minimum Standards for school buses. In addition, I participated in the development of the Alaska School Bus Driver Training Program and the Alaska Enhanced School Bus Inspection Program.

One of the major ways to protect the school bus and its passengers is to ensure that other motorists are aware of its presence. A "safety cushion" around a school bus is created by the unique color and lighting equipment that are part of existing school bus standards. This allows the motorists on the road the opportunity to take extra precautions, knowing that school children are nearby. Strobe lights, in the stop arm and on the roof, increase the effectiveness of this "safety cushion".

We have used white strobe lights on the tops of our school buses in Fairbanks for at least 15 years. (They have been on so long that no one remembers when they were first required.) They are particularly effective in the difficult conditions of darkness, snow, and ice fog in which we operate in Fairbanks. Under adverse conditions drivers are aware of the strobe long before seeing the actual bus itself. This can be a critical safety feature when visibility is reduced to less than 50 feet.

The best measure of the usefulness of strobes that I can offer is the public awareness their presence. The strobes are so much a part of school busing in Fairbanks that monitoring for compliance is not necessary. The public is so accustomed to seeing strobes on our buses that my office receives complaints when a bus

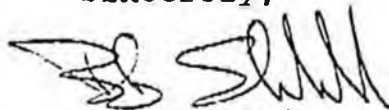
is running around without a strobe.

We have no direct experience with strobe in the stop paddles in Fairbanks. However, they were tested as part of a pilot project of the Alaska School Bus Safety Committee, and proved effective there as well. I have observed them on buses in the Kenai Peninsula area and found the strobes to be a great improvement over standard paddle lights.

Your efforts to increase the "safety cushion" around our school buses through the mandatory use of strobes is supported throughout the pupil transportation industry. The significant increase in safety certainly warrants the small additional cost to the price of an entire school bus. Your efforts to retrofit the existing buses in the state will create an immediate impact for a relatively low cost. Such an approach is far superior to a slow phase-in on new buses. In addition to the several year delay in equipping all buses in the state, the effort to raise public awareness would be diminished by the lack of standardized equipment between buses.

Thank you for your support of safe, effective pupil transportation. Do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance to your efforts.

Sincerely,



Bob Shefchik
Transportation Coordinator



ASTA

Alaska School Transportation Association

COPY

FEB 12

Box 952 Delta Junction Alaska 99737

February 7, 1991

Representative Mike Navarre
Pouch V (MS 3100)
Juneau, Alaska 99811

RE: HB 85

Dear Representative Navarre:

I regret that I was unable to participate in this morning's scheduled teleconference regarding House Bill 85: "An Act relating to equipment required on a school bus...".

The matter of a statewide requirement for red strobe lights on stop arms and white strobe lights on the roof of buses has not been brought before the membership of this organization. While most would agree that these items provide increased visibility in some areas (such as Fairbanks), one wonders if the requirement is necessary in all areas? Not all areas of the state experience ice fog conditions.

Other vehicles (such as DOT road maintenance equipment and fuel tankers) use the white stobe lights, so their use will not automatically tell motorists there's a school bus in the vicinity.

Retrofitting all buses will certainly be a challenge -- school buses are already electrical and wiring "nightmares". This is not to say it would be impossible.

At any rate, if the requirements added to AS 28.05.104(b) (1) are to become law, then most definitely the fiscal appropriation in Sec. 2 is imperative!

If the Legislature adds these requirements, the state must be prepared to pay for same. School districts and school transportation contractors are already working with severe budget constraints due to reductions in funding and fuel costs which have sky-rocketed since the onset of the Persian Gulf crisis last fall.

It would be unreasonable to expect districts and contractors to bear the costs of retrofitting without reimbursement by the state. And I doubt that even the amounts noted in Sec. 2 will be adequate to cover all the costs of parts and installation labor. (There will also be additional maintenance expenses for these items.)

We will appreciate you keeping our association informed of developments as HB 85 proceeds through committees. If we can provide further suggestions or input, please let us know.

Cordially,

Loretta Nistler
Vice-president

cc: House Committees on Transportation; Health, Education and Social Services;
Finance
Sen. Dick Shultz; Rep. Johnny Gonzales
Romayne Kareen, Pupil Trans., DOE



House Transportation Committee

DATE: 2/7/91

PLACE: Room 17

SUBJECT OF MEETING:

HB 85 - Equipment on school buses

HB 72 - Exempting watercraft from transporter licenses

NAME	REPRESENTING	BUSINESS/PERSONAL MAILING ADDRESS	ZIP	(H) PHONE	(W) PHONE	DO YOU WANT TO TESTIFY?		WHAT SUBJECT/ WHICH BILL?
Steve Peterson	ANAFOS	P.O. Box 2-2000	99507	465	465 4101	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	Transporter HB72
Kurt West	Dept Commerce	PO Box D	99511		2543	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	Transporter HB72
Rep. Navarre	Alaska Legislature	P.O. Box V	99511		3706	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	School buses HB85
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	



House Transportation Committee

DATE: 2/7/91

PLACE: Room 17

SUBJECT OF MEETING:
 HB 85 - Equipment on school buses
 HB 72 - Exempting watercraft from transporter licenses

NAME	REPRESENTING	BUSINESS/PERSONAL MAILING ADDRESS	ZIP	(H) PHONE	(W) PHONE	DO YOU WANT TO TESTIFY?		WHAT SUBJECT/ WHICH BILL?
Steve Peterson	ADPERS	P.O. Box 2000	99501	465-4400	465-4400	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	Transporter HB72
Kurt West	Dpt Commerce	PO Box D	99511		2543	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	Transporter HB72
Rep. Navarre	Alaska Legislature	P.O. Box V	99811		3706	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	School buses HB85
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	
						<input type="radio"/>	N	