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Date: (Filing No. H- )

**TRANSPORTATION**

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**STATE OF MAINE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
132ND LEGISLATURE  
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 1377, L.D. 2053, “An Act to Improve Safety by Allowing the Use of Variable-message Signs on Public Service Vehicles”

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

**'An Act to Improve Safety by Allowing the Use of Variable-message Signs on Certain Vehicles'**

Amend the bill by inserting after the title and before the enacting clause the following:

**'Emergency preamble. Whereas,** acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

**Whereas,** vehicles that assist with traffic incidents and improve roadway safety that are equipped with variable-message signs mounted on the vehicle are prepared to begin using variable-message signs immediately; and

**Whereas,** a delay in allowing vehicles that assist with traffic incidents and improve roadway safety to use variable-message signs could allow for a greater number of traffic-related injuries to occur; and

**Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,'

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and inserting the following:

**'Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §2054, sub-§1, ¶K** is enacted to read:

K. “Safety service patrol vehicle” means a vehicle, equipped with a variable-message sign, used or contracted by the department or the Maine Turnpike Authority to assist with traffic incidents and improve roadway safety.

**Sec. 2. 29-A MRSA §2054, sub-§1, ¶L** is enacted to read:

**COMMITTEE AMENDMENT**

1 L. "Variable-message sign" means a traffic control device on which a message can be  
2 displayed and changed manually, electronically, mechanically, electromechanically or  
3 by other means to provide information about traffic congestion, traffic accidents,  
4 maintenance operations, adverse weather conditions, roadway conditions or organized  
5 events or other necessary roadway safety information.

6 **Sec. 3. 29-A MRSA §2054, sub-§12** is enacted to read:

7 **12. Variable-message signs.** A variable-message sign may be used on a wrecker,  
8 police vehicle, fire department vehicle, safety service patrol vehicle or highway  
9 maintenance vehicle in the manner prescribed in this subsection. The variable-message sign  
10 may not exceed the width of the vehicle on which it is mounted and may be displayed only  
11 facing traffic behind the vehicle. The operator of a vehicle under this subsection may use a  
12 variable-message sign as follows.

13 A. The operator of a wrecker may use a variable-message sign on that vehicle while it  
14 is stationary and engaged in repair, loading or unloading a vehicle or performing a  
15 vehicle recovery. A variable-message sign mounted on a wrecker must display amber  
16 lights that create right or left arrows or the words “slow down” or “move over.”

17 B. The operator of a police vehicle, fire department vehicle, safety service patrol  
18 vehicle or highway maintenance vehicle may use a variable-message sign on that  
19 vehicle to provide information about traffic congestion, traffic accidents, maintenance  
20 operations, adverse weather conditions, roadway conditions or organized events or  
21 other necessary roadway safety information. The variable-message sign must display  
22 right or left arrows or the words “slow down,” “move over,” “accident ahead,” “crash  
23 ahead” or other similar language. Other messages not described in this paragraph may  
24 be displayed on a variable-message sign if the additional messages are established by  
25 rule and in line with standards in accordance with the latest edition of the Manual on  
26 Uniform Traffic Control Devices published by the United States Department of  
27 Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

28 The Commissioner of Public Safety or the commissioner’s designee may adopt rules  
29 as necessary for the purpose of implementing this paragraph. Rules adopted pursuant  
30 to this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375,  
31 subchapter 2-A.

32 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation  
33 takes effect when approved.'

34 Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section  
35 number to read consecutively.

## 36 SUMMARY

37 This amendment strikes and replaces the bill and changes the title.

38 1. It adds an emergency preamble and clause.

39 2. It defines “safety service patrol vehicle” to mean a vehicle, equipped with a variable-  
40 message sign, used or contracted by the Department of Transportation or the Maine  
41 Turnpike Authority to assist with traffic incidents and improve roadway safety.

1           3. It requires a variable-message sign on a wrecker, police vehicle, fire department  
2 vehicle, safety service patrol vehicle or highway maintenance vehicle to be displayed  
3 facing traffic behind the vehicle and prohibits the variable-message sign from exceeding  
4 the width of the vehicle on which it is mounted.

5           4. It allows the operator of a wrecker to use a variable-message sign on that vehicle  
6 while the vehicle is stationary and engaged in roadside repair, loading or unloading a  
7 vehicle or performing vehicle recovery.

8           5. It limits the messages on a variable-message sign on a wrecker to amber lights that  
9 create a right or left arrow or the words “slow down” or “move over.”

10          6. It allows the operator of a police vehicle, fire department vehicle, safety service  
11 patrol vehicle or highway maintenance vehicle to use a variable-message sign on that  
12 vehicle to provide information about traffic congestion, traffic accidents, maintenance  
13 operations, adverse weather conditions, roadway conditions or organized events or other  
14 necessary roadway safety information.

15          7. It limits the messages that may be displayed on a variable-message sign mounted to  
16 a police vehicle, fire department vehicle, safety service patrol vehicle or highway  
17 maintenance vehicle to right or left arrows or the words “slow down,” “move over,”  
18 “accident ahead,” “crash ahead” or other similar language approved by rule.

19          8. It allows the Commissioner of Public Safety or the commissioner’s designee to  
20 adopt routine technical rules as necessary for the purpose of implementing these provisions.