SB 443 A   STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Olsen

Senate Committee On Business and General Government

Minority Report

Action Date:	04/09/19
Action:	Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.) Minority
Fiscal:	Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue:	No revenue impact
Report Signers:	Sen. Fred Girod, Sen. Alan Olsen
Prepared By:	Tyler Larson, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates:	2/21, 4/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires use of headlights at all times when vehicle is driven upon a highway. Makes failure to use headlights a Class B traffic violation. Establishes fine of $100 for first violation and $250 for second violation.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:
- Potential safety benefits of mandatory headlight use
- Impact of mandatory headlight use on older vehicles
- Maximum fines for Class B traffic violations and potential impact of new violation on drivers

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Makes first offense a specific fine violation with a presumptive fine of $100, second offense a Class D traffic violation, and third or subsequent offense a Class B traffic violation. Makes conforming amendments.

BACKGROUND:

Current statute requires drivers to use headlights bright enough to reveal persons and vehicles on the highway at a safe distance in advance of the vehicle when limited visibility conditions exist. Failure to use headlights when required for limited visibility is a Class B traffic violation.

A 2017 review of multiple studies by the National Law Review concluded that turning on headlights while driving may reduce accidents. The review notes that Denmark saw a 37 percent reduction in left turn related incidents after requiring daytime running lights, and Canada saw an 11 percent reduction in multiple vehicle crashes after enacting a similar requirement.

Senate Bill 443-MRA requires headlights to be used whenever a vehicle is driven on any public road. Failure to use headlights is a specific fine offense of $100 for the first violation, a Class D traffic violation with a $250 maximum fine for the second violation, and a Class B traffic violation for any subsequent violation.