

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: June 16, 2008
POSITION: Oppose
SPONSOR: California Council of the Blind

BILL NUMBER: SB 1174
AUTHOR: A. Lowenthal

BILL SUMMARY: Hybrid and Electric Vehicles: Impaired Pedestrians

This bill would direct the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) to convene a Quiet Motorized Vehicle and Safe Mobility Committee to conduct research, as specified, and formulate recommendations that would ensure all motor vehicles, regardless of engine type or configuration, emit sound sufficient to be heard and localized by pedestrians who are blind or visually impaired.

FISCAL SUMMARY

The Energy Commission estimates \$725,000 to convene the committee and develop a report for the Legislature. This estimate is based on historical costs for similar committees. The Department of Finance (Finance) notes that the scope of this bill would better be handled by the Department of Motor vehicles as the scope of the prescribed research would encompass all motor vehicles, not just hybrid vehicles.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

The amendments to this bill since our last analysis of the April 10, 2008 version, would add a prescribed order for the research to be conducted and specify all motorized road vehicles are to emit sound that can be heard by visually impaired individuals. These amendments are minor and do not alter our previous position.

COMMENTS

Finance is opposed to this bill because it is premature. Federal legislation, the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act of 2008 (HR 5734), is pending that would set the sound guidelines for quiet vehicles.

Current law directs the Energy Commission to serve as the state's primary energy policy and planning agency, including policy and planning related to transportation fuels and vehicle technologies. Since 1996, the Energy Commission has administered the Public Interest Energy Research (PIER) program. The PIER program supports energy research, development and demonstration projects that is intended to bring environmentally safe, affordable and reliable energy services and products to the marketplace. Transportation research under the PIER program is intended to accelerate the development, availability, and use of alternative fuels, advanced vehicle technologies, and advanced transportation systems and strategies.

(Continued)

COMMENTS (continued)

This bill would:

- Make declarations of the dangers to pedestrians posed by electric and gas-electric hybrid vehicles.

Analyst/Principal Date Program Budget Manager Date
(0621) K. DaRosa Karen Finn

Department Deputy Director Date

Governor's Office: By: Date: Position Approved
Position Disapproved

BILL ANALYSIS Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)

**BILL ANALYSIS/ENROLLED BILL REPORT--(CONTINUED)**  
**AUTHOR** **AMENDMENT DATE**

**Form DF-43**  
**BILL NUMBER**

A. Lowenthal

June 16, 2008

SB 1174

- Require the Energy Commission to convene a committee comprised of representatives of vehicle manufacturers, the blind or visually impaired pedestrian community, vehicle research entities, and law enforcement organizations.
- Direct the committee to research, identify, and make recommendations to the Energy Commission on strategies to ensure that motor vehicles are able to be heard. In conducting this research the committee would follow a prescribed order that would include sound analysis, the impact of speed, distance, weather, and road surfaces on sound emitting equipment, and an evaluation of existing detection technologies.
- Require the Energy Commission to report by January 1, 2010 to the Legislature on the recommendations of the committee.
- Direct the Energy Commission to use non-General Fund revenue sources to implement the bill
- Sunset on January 1, 2011.

Federal legislation (HR 5734), intended to protect blind people and other pedestrians from the dangers posed by quiet cars, was introduced on April 9, 2008. The measure would require the federal Department of Transportation to establish safety standards for hybrids and other vehicles that make little discernible noise, including an audible means for alerting people that cars are nearby. Given this pending federal legislation, this bill is premature.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)							Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)							
	CO	PROP							
	RV	98	FC	2008-2009	FC	2009-2010	FC	2010-2011	
3360/Energy Comm	SO	No	C	\$363	C	\$363			- 0381
<u>Fund Code</u>	<u>Title</u>								
0381	Public Int Res, Dev & Demonstratn Progm								