

# ASSEMBLY LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **ASSEMBLY, No. 1179**

with committee amendments

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MAY 5, 2008

The Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 1179.

As amended, Assembly Bill No. 1179 requires motor vehicle operators to reduce the speed of their vehicles and change lanes when approaching an authorized emergency vehicle, tow truck, or highway maintenance or emergency service vehicle that is displaying certain flashing, blinking, or alternating emergency lights.

Under the amended bill's provisions, the operator of a motor vehicle approaching an authorized emergency vehicle is to approach the vehicle with due caution and, absent any other direction by a law enforcement officer, make a lane change into a lane not adjacent to the authorized emergency vehicle. If a lane change would be impossible, prohibited by law or unsafe, the operator is to reduce the speed of the motor vehicle to a reasonable and proper speed for the existing road and traffic conditions.

The amended bill also requires the operator of a motor vehicle approaching a stationary tow truck or highway maintenance or emergency service vehicle to approach the vehicle with due caution and, absent any other direction by a law enforcement officer, make a lane change into a lane not adjacent to the tow truck or highway maintenance or emergency service vehicle if possible in the existing safety and traffic conditions. If a lane change would be impossible, prohibited by law or unsafe, the operator is to reduce the speed of the motor vehicle to a reasonable and proper speed for the existing road and traffic conditions.

Under the amended bill, an authorized emergency vehicle is defined as a fire department vehicle, police vehicle, or approved ambulance responding to an emergency call when that vehicle is displaying a flashing, blinking, or alternating red or blue light, or a configuration of red or blue lights. As introduced, the bill applied only to emergency vehicles displaying red lights.

A violation of the bill's provisions is punishable by a fine of \$100 to \$500.

This amended bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2008-2009 session pending technical review. As reported, the amended bill

includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to include within its provisions emergency vehicles displaying blue lights or displaying any configuration of red and blue lights. As introduced, the bill only included emergency vehicles displaying red lights.