AN ACT to renumber and amend 349.26 (1); to amend 285.30 (5) (c), 341.25 (title), 341.25 (1) (b), 341.297 (1), 342.14 (1r), 342.14 (3m) and 349.26 (2); and to create 285.30 (5) (k) and 349.26 (3) of the statutes; relating to: neighborhood electric vehicles.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, a municipality may, by ordinance, allow the use of a neighborhood electric vehicle on a roadway under its jurisdiction that has a speed limit of 35 miles per hour or less. A “neighborhood electric vehicle” is a motor vehicle that has successfully completed the neighborhood electric vehicle America test program conducted by the federal Department of Energy and that meets certain standards for low−speed vehicles under federal law, but does not include a golf cart.

A municipality that enacts an ordinance may also be required to enter into an agreement with, or obtain the consent of, others with which roadway jurisdiction is shared permitting neighborhood electric vehicles to use or cross the roadway. A municipality that enacts an ordinance may provide for municipal licensing of neighborhood electric vehicles that are used within the municipality.

This bill eliminates municipal licensing of neighborhood electric vehicles and instead requires these vehicles to be registered with the Department of Transportation (DOT). The registration fee and biennial registration period are the same as those currently applicable to registration of mopeds. The bill also clarifies and modifies municipal authority to allow operation of neighborhood electric vehicles on the municipality’s roadways. Under the bill, a municipal ordinance may
apply to a connecting highway within the municipality, or to an intersection within
the municipality where the municipality’s roadway crosses a state trunk highway,
only if all of the following apply: 1) the municipality provides written notice to DOT
of the ordinance, including identification of any connecting highway or state trunk
highway intersection to which the ordinance will apply; and 2) within 21 days of
receiving this notice, DOT consents or fails to object to the use of neighborhood
electric vehicles on the connecting highway or through the intersection crossing the
state trunk highway. If DOT makes a timely objection to the use of neighborhood
electric vehicles on the connecting highway or through the intersection crossing the
state trunk highway, the municipality’s ordinance is not valid for that connecting
highway or that intersection crossing the state trunk highway.

Current law generally requires the owner of a vehicle subject to registration to
apply for a certificate of title for the vehicle. An applicant for a certificate of title must
pay a fee of $28.50, plus an environmental impact fee of $9, plus a supplemental title
fee of $7.50.

Under this bill, the owner of a neighborhood electric vehicle must apply for a
certificate of title, which controls legal ownership of and interests in the vehicle. The
owner must pay the certificate of title fee of $28.50, but is not required to pay the
environmental impact fee or supplemental title fee.

Current law requires DOT to conduct a motor vehicle emission inspection and
maintenance program (I/M program) in counties in which the air quality does not
meet certain federal standards. Under the I/M program, most motor vehicles that
are subject to emission limitations established by the Department of Natural
Resources (DNR) must pass periodic emission inspections and may not be registered
by DOT unless they have passed these inspections. Certain motor vehicles are
exempt from emission inspections, including mopeds, motorcycles, off-road utility
vehicles, vehicles powered by diesel fuel, most vehicles exempt from registration, and
vehicles for which inspection, in the judgment of DNR, is not a cost-effective method
for attaining and maintaining air quality. This bill exempts neighborhood electric
vehicles from emission inspections.

For further information see the state and local fiscal estimate, which will be
printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do
enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 285.30 (5) (c) of the statutes is amended to read:
285.30 (5) (c) A motor vehicle exempt from registration under s. 341.05, except
that a motor vehicle owned by the United States is not exempt unless it comes under
par. (a), (b), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), or (j), or (k).

SECTION 2. 285.30 (5) (k) of the statutes is created to read:
285.30 (5) (k) A neighborhood electric vehicle, as defined in s. 340.01 (36r).

SECTION 3. 341.25 (title) of the statutes is amended to read:

341.25 (title) Annual and biennial registration fees; biennial motorcycle fees.

SECTION 4. 341.25 (1) (b) of the statutes is amended to read:

341.25 (1) (b) For each motorcycle or moped with a curb weight of 1,499 pounds or less, except a specially designed vehicle under s. 341.067, which is designed for the transportation of persons rather than property, and for each neighborhood electric vehicle, a biennial fee of $23.

SECTION 5. 341.297 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

341.297 (1) A motorcycle or moped, or neighborhood electric vehicle, as specified in s. 341.25 (1) (b).

SECTION 6. 342.14 (1r) of the statutes is amended to read:

342.14 (1r) Upon filing an application under sub. (1) or (3), an environmental impact fee of $9, by the person filing the application. All moneys collected under this subsection shall be credited to the environmental fund for environmental management. This subsection does not apply after December 31, 2007. This subsection does not apply to an application for a certificate of title for a neighborhood electric vehicle.

SECTION 7. 342.14 (3m) of the statutes is amended to read:

342.14 (3m) Upon filing an application under sub. (1) or (3), a supplemental title fee of $7.50 by the owner of the vehicle, except that this fee shall be waived with respect to an application under sub. (3) for transfer of a decedent’s interest in a vehicle to his or her surviving spouse. The fee specified under this subsection is in
addition to any other fee specified in this section. This subsection does not apply to
an application for a certificate of title for a neighborhood electric vehicle.

SECTION 8. 349.26 (1) of the statutes is renumbered 340.01 (36r) and amended
to read:

340.01 (36r) In this section, “neighborhood electric vehicle” means a self-propelled motor vehicle that has successfully completed the neighborhood electric vehicle America test program conducted by the federal department of energy, and that conforms to the definition and requirements for low-speed vehicles as adopted in the federal motor vehicle safety standards for low-speed vehicles under 49 CFR 571.3 (b) and 571.500. “Neighborhood electric vehicle” does not include a golf cart.

SECTION 9. 349.26 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

349.26 (2) The governing body of any city, town, or village may by ordinance allow the use of a neighborhood electric vehicle on a roadway that has a speed limit of 35 miles per hour or less and over which the governing body city, town, or village has jurisdiction. A city, town, or village that passes an ordinance under this section shall enter into an agreement with, or obtain the consent of, each governing body that shares jurisdiction over a roadway within the city, town, or village, to permit neighborhood electric vehicles to use or cross the roadway. An ordinance passed under this section may contain a provision for the city, town, or village to license neighborhood electric vehicles that are used within the city, town, or village limits.

SECTION 10. 349.26 (3) of the statutes is created to read:
349.26 (3) (a) An ordinance under sub. (2) may apply to a connecting highway, or to an intersection where the roadway crosses a state trunk highway, within the city, town, or village only if all of the following apply:

1. The city, town, or village provides written notice to the department of the ordinance, including identification of any connecting highway or state trunk highway intersection to which the ordinance will apply.

2. Within 21 days of receiving the notice under subd. 1., the department has provided written or oral consent to the use of neighborhood electric vehicles on the connecting highway or through the intersection crossing the state trunk highway or has failed to object to the use of neighborhood electric vehicles on the connecting highway or through the intersection crossing the state trunk highway.

(b) If the department makes a timely objection under par. (a) 2., no ordinance enacted under this section is valid for that connecting highway or that intersection crossing the state trunk highway.


(1) Notwithstanding section 341.25 of the statutes, as affected by this act, and section 341.31 of the statutes, if a person has licensed, prior to the effective date of this subsection, any neighborhood electric vehicle in accordance with an ordinance enacted by a city, town, or village providing for such licensing, the person may register any such neighborhood electric vehicle with the department of transportation at no additional fee for the vehicle’s entire initial registration period if the city, town, or village license is valid at the time that the person applies for registration with the department of transportation and if the person applies for registration within 2 years after the effective date of this subsection. The 2-year
initial registration period for the neighborhood electric vehicle shall commence from the date that the certificate of registration is issued.