



Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

January 21, 2016

Testimony on Senate Bill 374

Thank you Chairman Petrowski and committee members for hearing Senate Bill 374 (SB 374) today. This bill makes a simple adjustment to current statute to allow collectors of historic vehicles to display corresponding authentic license plates from the time period.

Under current law, owners of special interest vehicles that were manufactured before 1979 can display the historic plates, but only when travelling to and from a parade or car show.

SB 374 extends that privilege to owners of a special interest vehicle made before 1985, a reconstructed vehicle that is reproduction of a vehicle manufactured before 1985, or a street modified vehicle made before 1985. Those who choose to do so must use original plates and not reproductions. These plates could be displayed at all times as long as they are registered with the Department of Transportation (DOT). Responsibility for checking the validity of these historic plates would fall to the DOT. Vehicle owners must display one plate on the back and one on the front of the vehicle. It is important to note that the collector or hobbyist license plates issued by the DOT would still have to be shown.

This bill eliminates red tape for individuals who invest significant time and resources into their hobby and are dedicated to maintaining the authenticity of their vehicles. As the owner of a former military vehicle myself, I understand the passion behind the industry and therefore strongly support this measure and I encourage you to do so as well.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 374.

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THOMAS WEATHERSTON

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 62ND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on SB 374 before the Senate Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs, January 21, 2016

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing on SB 374.

This bill will allow owners of vehicles manufactured before 1985 the option to display the period correct plates that were issued by the Wisconsin DOT during the model year of the vehicle. The period correct plates will be registered with the DOT and will then be able to be displayed at all times. 38 states already allow some form of period correct plates on vehicles in certain circumstances.

Current law allows period correct plates to be used by pre-1979 cars but only when they are traveling to a car show or parade. This bill keeps that provision in place for those who may not want to use period correct plates all the time, but extends the date range to 1985 for consistency. 1985 was chosen as the cutoff date because that was the last year of the yellow and black plate design. Plates issued in 1986 and after look similar to the standard plates issued today. The change in year was the only alteration to that provision. An owner who wishes only to drive to car shows and parades with historical plates may continue to do so without change.

The plates would need to be originals issued by the state and not reproductions, but refurbishment would be allowed. DOT would check the plates to make sure that the number was not already in use or reserved. The vehicle owner would need to possess and display both matching period correct plates, and would have to also keep the collector or hobbyist plate issued by DOT inside the vehicle.

Amendment 1 to SB 387 was drafted to address the issues raised in the fiscal estimate. The amendment will allow DOT to spend \$118,700 for costs associated with implementing the program, which are largely IT costs that must be done before any registration can begin. Once the program begins accepting applications, the DOT estimates that it will bring in \$74,775 annually from registrations at a cost of \$23,600 in staff time. That equals \$51,175 in increased revenue for the DOT every year, which would cover the implementation costs in the third year.

The most important point to remember about this bill is that it creates an option for vehicle owners to use historical license plates, it does not mandate or require anyone to participate.

Thank you again for holding this hearing on SB 374.

Comments regarding SB-374

Jan. 21, 2016
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I am here today representing myself, Tom Zat owner of Alfa Heaven and Motorama Car Museum in Aniwa, and Curt Rymkus who since 1971 has chaired the two citizen committees that cooperated with DOT to create favorable vehicle equipment and titling laws for the Specialty Vehicle community. Collectively, we were responsible for the passage of 2009 Act 225, 2011 Act 235, and 2013 Act 103, which modified registration requirements for owners of Collector and HMV vehicles, and have been very popular with enthusiasts. Most recently, we worked with DMV to clarify Title Bonding procedures. Our email group includes over a hundred car clubs and individuals within the state, plus WCCA (Wis. Car Club Alliance). I personally am not interested in historic plates, but I know that many within our group are.

Curt, Tom, and I looked this over, and we think it's rather a mish mash, and poorly written. It takes away some current privileges, doesn't include some parts it probably ought to, and has some parts we don't like. Consequently, it is not supported by either WCCA (Wis. Car Club Alliance) nor SEMA (Specialty Equipment Marketing Association).

Current law allows you to run one or two historic plates on your Collector or Hobbyist registered vehicle, if your car is '79 or older, to go to car shows or parades only, and do this for free. The plates do not have to be Wisconsin plates, nor pristine, and you don't have to find two identical plates (which can be a real challenge, as all the fronts get damaged). If you run only one historic plate, it must be rear-mounted.

(FWIW, we think that allowing someone to bolt on unregistered plates and drive around is only asking for trouble. Imagine peeling out from a car show, and no one can identify the vehicle because the plates are not registered anywhere. We think this is dumb, but that's the current law. But we do not want to cede any rights, even dumb ones.)

The proposed bill will allow you to use historic plates permanently, and the car can be '85 or older, but you've got to have two authentic matching pristine historic Wisconsin plates (finding a matching authentic pristine PAIR is darn near impossible and reproductions don't count), and you must pay \$15 for registration of the historic plates.

This bill would still allow you to run a single historic plate to and from car shows and parades for free and without registration, but requires that IF you run two historic plates THEN you must register with DMV *even if it's just to car shows and parades*. (Currently, no registration of the historic plates is required.) We do not like the vagueness of "any means approved by the department" phrase at all. ***This must be clarified***, especially in light of recent, previous "creative (mis)interpretations" by WisDOT's OGC. We think the cost estimate of \$118,700 is high, in light of today's economy, and considering that the current system is free for owners and costs WisDOT zero.

We support the option of permanent, free use of one historic plate on the front of a vehicle, with the current Collector or Hobbyist plate displayed on the rear of the vehicle. That way, owners can locate one historic plate, display it on their vehicle whenever they want to, but the identification of the vehicle and proof of current registration are displayed also.

We don't see this bill as a win for the state, nor for the majority of owners. Our offer still stands, to work with Rep. Weatherston to craft a bill which works for owners and the department. I just don't think this current bill does.