

Senate Bill No. 240

Passed the Senate September 11, 2009

Secretary of the Senate

Passed the Assembly September 11, 2009

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

This bill was received by the Governor this _____ day
of _____, 2009, at _____ o'clock ____M.

Private Secretary of the Governor

CHAPTER _____

An act to amend Section 21809 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 240, Wright. Vehicles: Department of Transportation vehicles.

(1) Existing law until January 1, 2010, requires a person driving a vehicle on a freeway approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle that is displaying emergency lights or a stationary tow truck that is displaying flashing amber warning lights, to approach with due caution, and before passing in the lane immediately adjacent to the stationary vehicle, absent other direction by a peace officer, to move into an available lane that is not immediately adjacent to the stationary vehicle or if that lane change would be unsafe or impracticable, to slow to a reasonable and prudent speed. A violation of those requirements is an infraction.

This bill would extend this provision indefinitely. The bill, except as specified, would also apply these requirements to a person driving a vehicle on a freeway that approaches a stationary marked Department of Transportation vehicle displaying flashing amber warning lights. By extending indefinitely, and expanding the scope of, an existing crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 21809 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

21809. (a) A person driving a vehicle on a freeway approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle that is displaying emergency lights, a stationary tow truck that is displaying flashing amber warning lights, or a stationary marked Department of Transportation vehicle that is displaying flashing amber warning lights, shall approach with due caution and, before passing in a lane immediately adjacent to the authorized emergency vehicle, tow truck, or Department of Transportation vehicle, absent other direction by a peace officer, proceed to do one of the following:

(1) Make a lane change into an available lane not immediately adjacent to the authorized emergency vehicle, tow truck, or Department of Transportation vehicle, with due regard for safety and traffic conditions, if practicable and not prohibited by law.

(2) If the maneuver described in paragraph (1) would be unsafe or impracticable, slow to a reasonable and prudent speed that is safe for existing weather, road, and vehicular or pedestrian traffic conditions.

(b) A violation of subdivision (a) is an infraction, punishable by a fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50).

(c) The requirements of subdivision (a) do not apply if the stationary authorized emergency vehicle that is displaying emergency lights, the stationary tow truck that is displaying flashing amber warning lights, or the stationary marked Department of Transportation vehicle that is displaying flashing amber warning lights is not adjacent to the freeway or is separated from the freeway by a protective physical barrier.

SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

Approved _____, 2009

Governor