

Good Morning, Senator Mazza and members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

My name is Dean Gilmore, Asst. Chief of the New Haven Volunteer Fire Dept., Chair of the Vt. State Firefighter's Assoc. Governmental Affairs Committee, VSFA representative to the Vt. Fire & Rescue Coalition. I would like to express our full support for Senate bill S.40.

Adding the usage of one blue light on the rear of fire apparatus and rescue vehicles is all about the safety of our first responders while out on the highway. When the motoring public sees blue lights they typically slow down much sooner than when they see just red. In most cases the blue light is seen first.

Studies done in 2004 by the Florida State Highway Patrol, 2008 by the University of Michigan Transportation Institute, 2012 by Federal Signal Corporation (a company making safety signaling equipment) all determined that people that are color deficient, red was the first color they couldn't detect, while blue was at the opposite end of the spectrum. It was also determined that blue lights are more effective during high sunlight conditions. Those studies were supported by studies from the SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers), and the US Fire Administration which also suggests because of the change in human vision from the cones during the day to the rods at night combinations of blue and red are most desirable to obtain maximum performance under both day and night.

That being said we also fully support the use of red lights in combination with blue on the rear of law enforcement vehicles as well. The House bill H.56 includes language to cover us all. We are all responding to and working at emergencies on our highways. These lighting packages are standard on all fire and rescue apparatus being built today, and being used by many throughout the state already, including law enforcement.

House bill H.56 also excludes the requirement that these lights only be activated when parked. This requirement would eliminate many departments from being able to use this safety change on apparatus because all manufacturing companies are now using multiplexing electronics. These wiring systems are using computers to measuring amps, output etc.. You can no longer splice into these systems without causing many electrical issues. Most departments today would just need to change a light lens to an existing light without causing any issues. That light would activate with all other emergency lights. This multiplexing is the practice today even with municipal dump trucks.

In conclusion, As I stated at the beginning of my testimony this is all about the safety of our first responders being safer while performing emergency operations while out on the highway. We need to use each and every tool in our tool box to protect our people and making sure they all return home to their families safely.

We ask that you help in this mission by passing this bill S.40 with the changes that are included in H.56 and allowing us to move forward.

Again, On behalf of the New Haven Volunteer Department, Vt. State Firefighters Assoc. and the Vt. Fire & Rescue Coalition I thank you for allowing me the time to testify before you today.

Please stay safe !