

FACT SHEET: SUPPORT S.66 – A QUIETER VERMONT

The Problem: Excessive Transportation Noise

Vermont's roadways and communities are increasingly affected by excessive vehicle noise from a small number of egregiously loud vehicles. These include:

- Any motor vehicle exhaust modified to increase noise beyond factory-installed levels
- Illegally modified motorcycle exhaust systems
- Unmuffled engine braking by commercial trucks

Due to Vermont's weak muffler laws, these vehicles may often pass state inspection, disturbing communities and affecting public health and quality of life.

The Solution: Strengthen Vehicle Noise Regulations

S.66 would modernize and tighten Vermont's muffler laws by:

- Ensuring improperly muffled vehicles fail the state inspection
- Establishing clear muffler standards for motorcycles, cars, and trucks
- Requiring muffled engine braking, with exceptions for emergencies
- Allowing local regulation of engine braking in sensitive areas near homes, schools, parks, and hospitals

S.66 focuses on stopping noise at its source through inspections.

FAQ

How will these changes to the law be enforced?

S.66 will be enforced mainly at the state motor vehicle inspection level. As already allowed, law enforcement has the authority to stop drivers for motor vehicle violations.

Can commercial fleets still self-inspect?

Yes, but they must follow updated muffler standards in the Vermont Periodic Inspection Manual (VPIM).

Does requiring muffled engine brakes affect safety?

No. Engine brakes can still be used, and unmuffled brakes are permitted in emergencies. Quiet zones can be created in sensitive areas.

What counts as improper muffling?

- Any vehicles lacking an effective muffler, or with a muffler cutout or straight pipe exhaust
- Motorcycles that do not have an EPA-stamped muffler
- Engine brakes on trucks that are not muffled

Bill History and Status

- Introduced by Sen. Rebecca White
- Received strong support from residents, health experts, and transportation professionals
- Amended to address trucking industry concerns
- Bipartisan support! Passed Senate Committee 5-0 and full Senate ***unanimously***.
- Now in the House Transportation Committee

Next Steps: Studies and Proposals Ordered by the Bill

- Identify appropriate maximum decibel levels for possible future enforcement, methods to determine vehicle is operating in excess of sound limits, and procedures for enforcement
- Review the citizen complaint process for vehicle noise issues

Together, We Can Make Vermont Quieter

S.66 gives us a practical, fair way to reduce transportation noise. Support this bill to protect Vermont's tranquility for residents, visitors, and wildlife.

For further information contact:

Laura Hill-Eubanks lhilleub@mindspring.com or 802-485-6277