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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH
LANSING

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House Bill 5538 and Senate Bill 969 (As Introduced)

Topic: Ski Area Safety
Sponsor: Representative Knollenberg and Senator Pappageorge
Co-sponsors: Representatives Shaffer, Wojno, and Robertson
Senator Birkholz
Committee: House Tourism, Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources
Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Introduced: January 17, 2008

Date of Summary: February 5, 2008

The bills amend the Ski Area Safety Act of 1962 to require the use of a visual or audible warning system to inform individuals when a snowmobile is being operated in a ski area. Snowmobile would be required to have the following equipment on ski slopes and trails:

- A siren.
- One operating white headlight.
- One operating red taillight.
- One red fluorescent flag at least 40 square inches in size and located at least 6 feet above the bottom of the snowmobile tracks.
- An operable brake system.

Snowmobiles are required to be operated by an individual at least 18 years of age who has received the training mandated by the bill. Operating requirements are as follows:

- Operation at a reasonable and prudent speed given the conditions, but not exceeding 10 miles per hour.
- The siren and flashing or rotating yellow light must be activated.

Other limitations on snowmobile operation include:

- The individual operating the snowmobile is required to give right-of-way to skiers and pedestrians at all times.
- Only the operator or the employee or contractual service provider of an operator may operate a snowmobile on a ski run, trail, or slope that is open to skiing.
- Snowmobiles may only be operated within areas and pathways reasonably designated and demarcated for such use.

The operator of a ski area is required to report deaths resulting from injuries in the ski area to the Ski Area Safety Board. Reports must be made within 24 hours after the operator is notified.

At least one employee training session is required to be held each ski season. The agenda are required to include the following as specified by the Board:

- Safe operation of trail maintenance equipment.
- Methods to be used for summoning aid in case of emergencies.
- Safe operation and use of snowmobiles in emergency response.
- Designated areas in which snowmobiles may be used to respond to an emergency.