

ASSEMBLY, No. 5437

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 11, 2023

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.
District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Requires that new motor vehicles be equipped with amplitude modulation radio.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning new motor vehicles and supplementing
2 P.L.1960, c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.).
3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:
6

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Amplitude modulation radio, commonly referred to as AM
9 radio, has been a feature in motor vehicle radios since the 1950s.

10 b. AM radio plays a critical role in informing the public about
11 natural disasters and other crises.

12 c. AM radio is capable of being transmitted over long
13 distances, making it essential for communication during a
14 catastrophe.

15 d. According to some estimates, approximately 47 million
16 Americans listen to AM radio to receive real-time federal and state
17 information concerning public safety incidents.

18 e. Owing to backup communications equipment and
19 generators, AM radio is often available when other communication
20 methods fail.

21 f. However, motor vehicle manufacturers, particularly
22 manufacturers of electric vehicles, are increasingly choosing to
23 discontinue support for AM radio in new motor vehicles, prompting
24 concern among emergency response professionals.

25 g. The director of the Federal Emergency Management
26 Agency's emergency-warning system asserts that eliminating AM
27 radios from motor vehicles could impact the ability of people to
28 receive vital public-safety information while traveling in motor
29 vehicles.

30 h. Accordingly, the Legislature finds that it is in the public
31 interest to take action to ensure that this essential communication
32 method remains present and functional in new motor vehicles.
33

34 2. a. As used in this act:

35 "AM radio" means an amplitude modulation radio capable of
36 receiving amplitude modulation frequency transmissions.

37 "Motor vehicle" means the same as that term is defined in
38 R.S.39:1-1.

39 "New motor vehicle" means a motor vehicle that has not been
40 previously sold to a person other than a distributor, wholesaler, or
41 dealer of motor vehicles for resale.

42 b. It shall be an unlawful practice and violation of P.L.1960,
43 c.39 (C.56:8-1 et seq.) for a person to sell or lease a new motor
44 vehicle in this State unless the motor vehicle is equipped with a
45 radio capable of receiving AM radio broadcasts.

46 c. The Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs in the
47 Department of Law and Public Safety may promulgate rules and
48 regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"

1 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the
2 purposes of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as
3 this bill).

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5 3. This act shall take effect one year following the date of
6 enactment.

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9 STATEMENT

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11 This bill requires new motor vehicles sold or leased in this State
12 to be equipped with a radio capable of receiving AM radio
13 broadcasts.

14 Amplitude modulation radio, commonly referred to as AM radio,
15 has been a feature in motor vehicle radios since the 1950s. AM
16 radio plays a critical role in informing the public about natural
17 disasters and other crises. AM radio is capable of being transmitted
18 over long distances, making it essential for communication during a
19 catastrophe. According to some estimates, approximately 47
20 million Americans listen to AM radio to receive real-time federal
21 and state information concerning public safety incidents. Owing to
22 backup communications equipment and generators, AM radio is
23 often available when other communication methods fail.

24 However, motor vehicle manufacturers, particularly
25 manufacturers of electric vehicles, are increasingly choosing to
26 discontinue support for AM radio in new motor vehicles, prompting
27 concern among emergency response professionals.

28 The director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's
29 emergency-warning system asserts that eliminating AM radio from
30 motor vehicles could impact the ability of people to receive vital
31 public-safety information while traveling. Accordingly, it is
32 essential that this communication method remain present and
33 functional in new motor vehicles.

34 A violation of the provisions of the bill would be considered an
35 unlawful practice under the consumer fraud act, P.L.1960, c.39
36 (C.56:8-1 et seq.). An unlawful practice is punishable by a
37 monetary penalty of not more than \$10,000 for a first offense and
38 not more than \$20,000 for any subsequent offense. In addition, a
39 violation can result in a cease and desist order issued by the
40 Attorney General, the assessment of punitive damages, and the
41 awarding of treble damages and costs to the injured.