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**Transportation Committee**

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**HB 2319**

**Brief Description:** Regulating traffic signal preemption devices.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Wallace, Armstrong, Murray, Campbell, Wood, Jarrett, Morrell, Lovick, Cooper, Sullivan, Kenney, Condotta, Chase and Edwards.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Defines traffic control signal preemption device and makes selling, owning, or using such a device a gross misdemeanor, except for authorized use by emergency or transit vehicles.

**Hearing Date:** 2/2/04

**Staff:** Page Scott (786-7301).

**Background:**

Traffic control signals may be designed and operated to respond to certain classes of approaching vehicles, usually emergency or transit vehicles, to give them priority in passing through an intersection. Devices which activate this priority or otherwise preempt the normal traffic signal operations have recently become more available to the general public through significant price reductions and internet purchases.

Current law prohibits persons from unlawfully altering traffic control signals or devices. A violation of these provisions is, at a maximum, a misdemeanor.

Current law presently addresses unauthorized use of optical strobe light devices. Optical strobe light devices emit optical signals at specific frequencies to traffic control signals in order to alter the cycle of the lights. Optical strobe light devices may only be installed or used on the following classes of vehicles: (1) law enforcement or emergency vehicles (to obtain the right of way at intersections); (2) Department of Transportation, city, or county maintenance vehicles (to perform maintenance tests); or (3) public transit vehicles (to accelerate the cycle of the lights). A violation of these provisions is a traffic infraction.

**Summary of Bill:**

Traffic control signal preemption devices are defined as a device that interferes with or alters the operation of a traffic control signal.

Selling, owning or using a traffic control signal preemption device is made a gross misdemeanor except for owners or operators of authorized emergency vehicles or municipal transit vehicles.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.