

House Republican Press Release

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Golf Cart Use Clarified



Questions have arisen about using golf carts on public roads, which I have supported to help elderly residents get around in the local beach communities. To clarify, here are some facts:

- On October 12, 2007, nearly a year ago, the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) wrote to police chiefs saying it would no

longer issue special license plates to golf cart type vehicles. Though it was customary for DMV to issue about 10 to 15 of these golf cart registrations statewide, DMV decided there was no basis in state law to allow golf carts on public roads. Their strict reading of state law is that the only place a golf cart could legally use public roads is to cross from one part of a golf course to another part of a golf course. Use on private roads also is okay.

- Long before this 2007 DMV policy change, I had assisted Old Saybrook police and beach communities in drafting a local ordinance establishing town policy for limited golf cart use in the beach communities. The ordinance was adopted with the idea that local towns are best equipped to set local rules and regulations. Under the latest strict DMV reading of the law, however, the state has effectively overruled Old Saybrook.
- To address this, I have talked at length with DMV Commission Bob Ward who is willing to help. According to the commissioner, no state law adopted this year made any change in the situation. Currently, he said DMV can register only vehicles capable of speeds of 40 miles per hour. The big concern is safety, when small, slow-moving golf carts mix on public roads with larger, faster cars and trucks.
- He and I discussed supporting new state legislation to deal with neighborhood-type Low Speed Vehicles. Other states and towns are looking at this option, as an aid to the elderly and as an economical, environmentally friendly alternative to gasoline-powered cars. The other option would be allowing DMV to offer limited plates (licensing/registration) for golf cart use under special circumstances.

Please be assured that members of the legislature and the Department of Motor Vehicles are working very closely to resolve this as soon as possible. I am hopeful we can craft a solution. Please call my Hartford office (1-800-842-1423) with your comments, questions or concerns on golf carts in our beach communities.

Rep. Marilyn Giuliano serves the 23rd Assembly District of Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook and coastal Westbrook in the state House of Representatives.