

Senator moves to amend H.F. No. 2438, in conference committee, as follows:

On R155, Senate language, (UEH2438-1)

Page 135, delete section 103 and insert:

"Sec. 103. STUDY; WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE SUPPLY AND AVAILABILITY."

Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given.

(b) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of transportation.

(c) "Transportation network company" has the meaning given in Minnesota Statutes, section 65B.472, subdivision 1.

(d) "Wheelchair accessible vehicle" or "WAV" means a publicly owned or privately owned vehicle equipped with a ramp or lift capable of transporting riders with a disability and subject to the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, sections 299A.11 to 299A.17.

Subd. 2. Study required. The commissioner must conduct a study on the supply and demand of wheelchair accessible vehicles and wheelchair accessible transportation services. The study must identify effective strategies to increase the availability of WAVs, improve service quality, and provide cost-effective transportation solutions tailored to the needs of riders with disabilities to enjoy greater freedom and convenience in their daily journeys. The commissioner must engage various stakeholders and members of the public as specified in subdivision 4. The commissioner must commence the study no later than August 1, 2025.

Subd. 3. Study objectives. (a) The commissioner's objectives in conducting the study must include:

(1) an identification of the challenges that affect WAV accessibility and service for riders with disabilities, including but not limited to insufficient supply, high operational costs, lack of on-demand options, and geographical disparities;

(2) a study of supply and demand issues for WAVs, including an identification of WAV transportation deserts in Minnesota communities and developing incentives to bolster the availability of WAVs in both public and private transportation networks;

(3) identifying possible measures to ensure the punctuality and reliability of WAV services for riders with disabilities;

(4) an evaluation on the impact that latent supply streams, market practices, and technological capabilities have on the ability to implement and fund high-quality WAV services at the lowest possible expense to taxpayers and private-pay WAV users;

(5) research and analysis on models that have been successful elsewhere in encouraging innovation and investment in on-demand transportation solutions to enable transportation parity for the disability community; and

(6) collected information on legislation and other policy changes that have been made in other states around the country to assess whether any already established solutions may be successful in Minnesota.

(b) To meet the study's objectives in paragraph (a), the commissioner must explore the following strategies:

(1) incentivizing WAV ownership through the use of tax breaks, subsidies, or grants to individuals and organizations who purchase WAVs to increase supply;

(2) exploring partnerships with WAV technology manufacturers to reduce costs for WAV-specific technologies;

(3) ensuring the adequate provision of specialized training for drivers on the operation of WAVs to improve service quality, supply, and delivery and ensure the needs and safety of riders with disabilities when using a WAV;

(4) identifying methods to improve the rate and frequency of drivers receiving training on providing rides to riders with disabilities or on the use of WAVs or WAV features, including an analysis of whether a private transportation network company driver should be required to complete a certain number of hours of disability training before providing WAV rides;

(5) expanding geographic coverage of WAV service by establishing partnerships with rural transit providers, expanding regulatory provisions, and deploying targeted funding mechanisms to address disparities in WAV availability across Minnesota's diverse regions;

(6) developing or utilizing user-friendly applications for riders to book WAV rides and improving dispatch systems to provide on-demand accessibility, real-time tracking, and communication systems to reduce response times; and

(7) encouraging partnerships with private transportation network companies and incentivizing their WAV operations and trained drivers.

3.1 (c) The study must assess whether the solutions identified in paragraph (b) are established
3.2 elsewhere in the United States and:

3.3 (1) provide a pathway to increasing the availability and accessibility of WAVs statewide;

3.4 (2) enhance service reliability and punctuality to reducing wait times for riders; and

3.5 (3) improve cost efficiency in service provision to benefit both users and providers.

3.6 Subd. 4. **Stakeholders; other models; public engagement.** (a) The commissioner must
3.7 consult and engage in meaningful collaboration with stakeholders in conducting the study
3.8 and determining whether identified solutions meet stated objectives. Stakeholders include,
3.9 but are not limited to, the following:

3.10 (1) public transportation service providers;

3.11 (2) providers of nonemergency medical transportation and special transportation services
3.12 in Minnesota;

3.13 (3) the State Patrol;

3.14 (4) the Minnesota Council on Disability;

3.15 (5) a driver advocacy organization representing transportation network drivers;

3.16 (6) private transportation network companies;

3.17 (7) one representative from the city of Minneapolis and one representative from the city
3.18 of St. Paul;

3.19 (8) a representative from the League of Minnesota Cities;

3.20 (9) a representative from taxicab companies operating in Minnesota cities;

3.21 (10) persons with disabilities and parents and caregivers of people with disabilities; or

3.22 (11) an organization with expertise in accessibility technology for transportation services
3.23 or accessible transportation design.

3.24 (b) In conducting the study, the commissioner must analyze other states' and communities'
3.25 efforts in establishing a robust and safe network of WAVs to identify enacted policy changes,
3.26 analyze developed programs against the stated objectives of the study required under this
3.27 section, and seek out and leverage information from these jurisdictions to evaluate what
3.28 may be successful in Minnesota.

4.1 Subd. 5. **Report.** By February 15, 2026, the commissioner must submit a final report
4.2 on the study to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees having
4.3 jurisdiction over transportation finance and policy. The report must:

4.4 (1) detail the input, consultation efforts, and public comment from stakeholders and the
4.5 public in conducting the study;

4.6 (2) include the data collection and analysis methods used to conduct the study and
4.7 develop recommendations for enhancing WAV services across Minnesota; and

4.8 (3) utilize identified policy changes made in other states around the country to assess
4.9 any already established solutions for WAV supply and availability. "

4.10 Amend the title accordingly