

CHAPTER 99-163

Senate Bill No. 996

An act relating to motor vehicles; creating s. 316.2122, F.S.; authorizing the use of low-speed vehicles on certain public roads; providing restrictions for such operation; amending s. 320.01, F.S.; providing a speed restriction for golf carts; defining the term “low-speed vehicle”; defining the term “utility vehicle”; amending s. 320.08001, F.S.; prescribing a license tax for low-speed vehicles; amending s. 316.2126, F.S.; authorizing the use of golf carts and utility vehicles by municipalities for municipal purposes and subject to certain conditions; amending s. 320.105, F.S.; exempting golf carts and utility vehicles from requirements to display license plates; amending s. 325.203, F.S.; exempting golf carts and utility vehicles from inspection requirements; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 316.2122, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

316.2122 Operation of a low-speed vehicle on certain roadways.—The operation of a low-speed vehicle, as defined in s. 320.01(42), on any road as defined in s. 334.03(15) or s. 334.03(33), is authorized with the following restrictions:

(1) A low-speed vehicle may be operated only on streets where the posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less. This does not prohibit a low-speed vehicle from crossing a road or street at an intersection where the road or street has a posted speed limit of more than 35 miles per hour.

(2) A low-speed vehicle must be equipped with headlamps, stop lamps, turn signal lamps, taillamps, reflex reflectors, parking brakes, rearview mirrors, windshields, seat belts, and vehicle identification numbers.

(3) A low-speed vehicle must be registered and insured in accordance with s. 320.02.

(4) Any person operating a low-speed vehicle must have in his or her possession a valid driver's license.

(5) A county or municipality may prohibit the operation of low-speed vehicles on any road under its jurisdiction if the governing body of the county or municipality determines that such prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

(6) The Department of Transportation may prohibit the operation of low-speed vehicles on any road under its jurisdiction if it determines that such prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

Section 2. Subsection (22) of section 320.01, Florida Statutes, is amended and subsections (42) and (43) are added to that section to read:

320.01 Definitions, general.—As used in the Florida Statutes, except as otherwise provided, the term:

(22) “Golf cart” means a motor vehicle that is designed and manufactured for operation on a golf course for sporting or recreational purposes and that is not capable of exceeding speeds of 20 miles per hour.

(42) “Low-speed vehicle” means any four-wheeled electric vehicle whose top speed is greater than 20 miles per hour but not greater than 25 miles per hour, including neighborhood electric vehicles. Low-speed vehicles must comply with the safety standards in 49 C.F.R. 571.500 and s. 316.2122.

(43) “Utility vehicle” means a motor vehicle designed and manufactured for general maintenance, security, and landscaping purposes, but the term does not include any vehicle designed or used primarily for the transportation of persons or property on a street or highway, or a golf cart, or an all-terrain vehicle as defined in s. 316.2074.

Section 3. Section 320.08001, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

320.08001 Electric vehicles; license tax.—The license tax for an electric vehicle or low-speed vehicle is the same as that prescribed in s. 320.08, for a vehicle that is not electrically powered.

Section 4. Section 316.2126, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

316.2126 Use of golf carts and utility vehicles by ~~certain~~ municipalities.—In addition to the powers granted by ss. 316.212 and 316.2125, municipalities ~~older than 400 years old~~ are hereby authorized to utilize golf carts and utility vehicles, as defined in s. 320.01, upon any state, county, or municipal roads located within the corporate limits of such municipalities, subject to the following conditions:

(1) Golf carts and utility vehicles must comply with the operational and safety requirements ~~operated beyond the authority granted in ss. 316.212 and 316.2125 and shall may~~ only be operated by municipal employees for municipal purposes, including, but not limited to, police patrol, traffic enforcement, and inspection of public facilities.

(2) In addition to the safety equipment required in s. 316.212(6), such golf carts and utility vehicles must be equipped with sufficient lighting and turn signal equipment.

(3) ~~The~~ Golf carts and utility vehicles may only be operated on state roads that have a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour or less.

(4) A municipal employee operating a golf cart or utility vehicle pursuant to this section must possess a valid driver’s license as required by s. 322.03.

Section 5. Section 320.105, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

320.105 Golf carts and utility vehicles; exemption.—Golf carts and utility vehicles, as defined in s. 320.01, when operated in accordance with s.

316.212 or s. 316.2126, are exempt from provisions of this chapter which require the registration of vehicles or the display of license plates.

Section 6. Paragraph (c) of subsection (4) of section 325.203, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

325.203 Motor vehicles subject to annual inspection; exemptions.—

(4) The following motor vehicles are not subject to inspection:

(c) Golf carts and utility vehicles, as defined in s. 320.01.

Section 7. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor May 13, 1999.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 13, 1999.