

# Senate Transportation Committee

*Vivian Hall 271-3091*

**HB 1362**, relative to motor vehicle equipment specifications.

**Hearing Date:** April 10, 2026

**Time Opened:** 1:20 p.m.

**Time Closed:** 1:32 p.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Ricciardi, McConkey, Ward, Prentiss and Fenton

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill establishes motor vehicle standards for tire tread depth and brake lining measurements and inspection standards for vehicle steering and suspension systems.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. T. Walsh

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**Who supports the bill:** Representative Thomas Walsh, Merrimack District 10 and Henry Giasson, Hillsborough District 24; and Jay O'Leary.

**Who opposes the bill:** None.

**Who is neutral on the bill:** Thomas Conlon, New Hampshire Department of Safety

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Representative Thomas Walsh, Merrimack District 10**

- Rep. Walsh said the bill updates vehicle safety standards following the repeal of the inspection program, relying on RSA 266 and previously used administrative rules.
- He added language on steering, suspension, brake lining, and tire tread standards, largely carried over from former rules and tied to manufacturer specifications.
- Rep. Walsh noted potential additional input from the Department of Safety on commercial vehicle tire requirements.
- He flagged concerns about unintended impacts on newer motorcycle designs with alternative steering/suspension systems.

- He recommended simplifying the bill by removing specific measurement thresholds and focusing instead on manufacturer specifications and general safety conditions.
- He acknowledged the bill is still incomplete and may need further revision.

**Senator Ricciardi** asked if an amendment is needed.

**Rep. Walsh** said he could get the language to the committee members and then have the committee do a committee amendment.

**Senator Prentiss** asked who is enforcing this and if cars are expected to be this way?

**Rep. Walsh** said the onus is on the vehicle. There is an amendment on the original appeal, HB 649 now has a definition of what a safe vehicle is. If they can inspect it, it complies with RSA 266. Or they can say that they didn't expect it at all. He would like to go through RSA 266.

**Senator Fenton** noted that the repealing has caused confusion. He mentioned there are no penalties or fence levels in this and asked if this ties back into the unsafe vehicle RSA?

**Rep. Walsh** said it is still there.

**Senator Fenton** asked about the compliance path.

**Rep. Walsh** explained that part of the amendment is coming back. The defective equipment was one of them.

### **Neutral Information Presented:**

#### **Lieutenant Thomas Conlon, New Hampshire Department of Safety**

- Lieutenant Conlon provided informational testimony and said the bill is beneficial because it reintroduces clear, objective safety standards into law.
- He noted the listed standards reflect those historically used for passenger vehicles and do not fully address commercial vehicles over 10,000 lbs.
- He pointed out missing provisions for commercial vehicle tire tread depth, including stricter requirements for steer axles.
- He also stated the bill does not address air brake systems, including appropriate brake lining thickness standards.
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**Senator McConkey** noted that commercial standard is over 10k lbs., and asked if a vehicle is over 10k lbs., would that require commercial certification?

**Lieutenant Conlon** said, "yes."

**Jay Laren, Automobile Dealer Association**

- Mr. Laren said that by putting this measure into law, it would remove that subjectivity.
- He offered to assist in writing an amendment.

V.H

Date Hearing Report completed: April 10, 2026