A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT AMENDING MOTOR VEHICLE LAWS REGULATING MODIFIED UTILITY VEHICLES AND DIRECTING THE USE OF CERTAIN FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 20-4.01(27) reads as rewritten:

"(27) Passenger Vehicles. –

…
g2. Modified utility vehicle. – A motor vehicle that (i) is manufactured or upfitted by a licensed manufacturer, dealer, or person or business otherwise engaged in vehicle manufacturing or modification for off-road use with equipment required by G.S. 20-121.1(2), G.S. 20-121.1(2a), except a vehicle identification number, and (ii) has four wheels, an engine displacement greater than 2,400 cubic centimeters, an overall length of 142 inches or greater, an overall width of 58 inches or greater, a maximum speed capability of 40 miles per hour or greater, and does not require an operator or passenger to straddle a seat. "Modified utility vehicle" does not include an all-terrain vehicle, golf cart, or utility vehicle, as defined in this section, or a riding lawn mower.

SECTION 2. G.S. 20-121.1 reads as rewritten:

"§ 20-121.1. Operation of a low-speed vehicle, mini-truck, or modified utility vehicle on certain roadways.

The operation of a low-speed vehicle, mini-truck, or modified utility vehicle is authorized with the following restrictions:

(1) A low-speed vehicle may be operated only on streets and highways where the posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less. A mini-truck or modified utility vehicle may be operated only on streets and highways where the posted speed limit is 55 miles per hour or less; provided, a modified utility vehicle may not be operated on any street or highway having four or more travel lanes unless the posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less. This subdivision does not prohibit a low-speed vehicle, mini-truck, or modified utility vehicle
from crossing a road or street at an intersection where the road or street being
crossed has a posted speed limit of more than 35 miles per hour.

(2) A low-speed vehicle, mini-truck, or modified utility vehicle or mini-truck
shall be equipped with headlamps, stop lamps, turn signal lamps, tail lamps,
reflex reflectors, parking brakes, rearview mirrors, windshield, windshield
wipers, speedometer, seat belts, and a vehicle identification number. Any such
required equipment shall be maintained in proper working order. If a modified
utility vehicle does not have a vehicle identification number, upon application
by the owner, the Division shall assign a vehicle identification number to the
modified utility vehicle prior to registration.

(2a) A modified utility vehicle shall be equipped with headlamps, stop lamps, turn
signal lamps, tail lamps, reflex reflectors, parking brakes, rearview mirrors, a
speedometer, seat belts, and a vehicle identification number. Any such
required equipment shall be maintained in proper working order. If a modified
utility vehicle does not have a vehicle identification number, upon application
by the owner, the Division shall assign a vehicle identification number to the
modified utility vehicle prior to registration. The operator of and all
passengers on a modified utility vehicle that is not equipped with a windshield
and windshield wipers shall wear a safety helmet, with a retention strap
properly secured, that complies with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard
(FMVSS) 218.

(4) The Department of Transportation may prohibit the operation of low-speed
vehicles, mini-trucks, or modified utility vehicles on any road or highway if it
determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

SECTION 3. Notwithstanding Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes,
G.S. 136-28.1, and any other provision of law to the contrary, the Department of Transportation,
Ferry Division, shall lease a passenger ferry vessel for operation between Hatteras and Ocracoke.
The term of the lease shall end no later than September 12, 2021. Of the funds appropriated in
S.L. 2020-91 from the Highway Fund to the Department of Transportation, the sum of nine
hundred forty-three thousand dollars ($943,000) in nonrecurring funds shall be used by the
Division to lease and operate the ferry.

SECTION 4. Sections 1 and 2 of this act become effective October 1, 2021. The
remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.