

Minnesota House of Representatives

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Work zone flaggers could soon report drivers for violating instructions

By Jonathan Avise



Representing Associated General Contractors, Abbey Bryduck testifies before the House Transportation and Regional Governance Policy Committee March 5 in support of a bill sponsored by Rep. Jason Rarick, left, that would authorize peace officers to issue citations based on a report from work zone flaggers. Photo by Andrew VonBank

Ignore a construction zone flagger while behind the wheel? Whether state troopers see it or not, Minnesota drivers could be ticketed for that work zone violation.

[HF1416](#), sponsored by [Rep. Jason Rarick](#) (R-Pine City), would authorize police officers to issue a citation to drivers who violate instructions from work zone flaggers based on a report from that employee.

The legislation also proposes to broaden a ban on the use of wireless communication devices to prohibit all use in a work zone, including phone calls and use of the device for non-communication purposes.

"We really need to make sure drivers are focused and attentive while in those work zones," Rarick told the House Transportation and Regional Governance Policy Committee Monday. No action was taken.

A companion, [SF1265](#), sponsored by [Sen. Susan Kent](#) (DFL-Woodbury), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee.

Under Rarick's proposal, an officer would have probable cause for a traffic stop if a worker reports a violation of a work zone flagger instruction within four hours of the incident. The flagger must also provide a vehicle description and license plate number.

Abbey Bryduck, a government affairs official for the Associated General Contractors of Minnesota, said drivers ignoring flaggers contributes to dangerous conditions in work zones.

"As you can imagine, if this is your workplace it's an extremely hazardous place to be if people aren't paying attention," she said.

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