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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 1967

03/08/2021 Authored by Novotny, Johnson, Theis, Daniels, Poston and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to public safety; increasing penalties for obstructing traffic access to a
1.3 trunk highway or airport; amending the crime of obstructing transit; amending
1.4 Minnesota Statutes 2020, sections 609.74; 609.855, subdivision 2.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 609.74, is amended to read:

1.7 609.74 PUBLIC NUISANCE.

1.8 (a) Whoever by an act or failure to perform a legal duty intentionally does any of the
1.9 following is guilty of maintaining a public nuisance, which is a misdemeanor:

1.10 (1) maintains or permits a condition which unreasonably annoys, injures or endangers
1.11 the safety, health, morals, comfort, or repose of any considerable number of members of
1.12 the public; or

1.13 (2) except as provided in paragraph (b), interferes with, obstructs, or renders dangerous
1.14 for passage, any public highway or right-of-way, or waters used by the public; or

1.15 (3) is guilty of any other act or omission declared by law to be a public nuisance and for
1.16 which no sentence is specifically provided.

1.17 (b) It is a gross misdemeanor for a person to interfere with or obstruct traffic that is
1.18 entering, exiting, or on a freeway or entering, exiting, or on a public roadway within the
1.19 boundaries of airport property with the intent to interfere with, obstruct, or otherwise disrupt
1.20 traffic. This paragraph does not apply to the actions of law enforcement or other emergency
1.21 responders, road or airport authorities, or utility officials, or their agents, employees, or
1.22 contractors when carrying out duties imposed by law or contract. For purposes of this

2.1 paragraph: (1) "airport" means an airport that has a control tower and airline service; and
 2.2 (2) "freeway" means any section of a divided highway where the only access and egress for
 2.3 vehicular traffic is from entrance and exit ramps.

2.4 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective August 1, 2021, and applies to crimes
 2.5 committed on or after that date.

2.6 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 609.855, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

2.7 Subd. 2. **Unlawful interference with transit operator.** (a) Whoever intentionally
 2.8 commits an act that interferes with or obstructs, or tends to interfere with or obstruct, the
 2.9 operation of a transit vehicle is guilty of ~~unlawful interference with a transit operator~~ a crime
 2.10 and may be sentenced as provided in paragraph (c).

2.11 (b) An act ~~that is~~ committed on a transit vehicle that distracts the driver from the safe
 2.12 operation of the vehicle, restricts passenger access to the transit vehicle, or ~~that~~ endangers
 2.13 passengers is a violation of this subdivision if an authorized transit representative has clearly
 2.14 warned the person once to stop the act.

2.15 (c) A person who violates this subdivision may be sentenced as follows:

2.16 (1) to imprisonment for not more than three years or to payment of a fine of not more
 2.17 than \$5,000, or both, if the violation was accompanied by force or violence or a
 2.18 communication of a threat of force or violence; or

2.19 (2) to imprisonment for not more than ~~90 days~~ one year or to payment of a fine of not
 2.20 more than ~~\$1,000~~ \$3,000, or both, if the violation was not accompanied by force or violence
 2.21 or a communication of a threat of force or violence.

2.22 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective August 1, 2021, and applies to crimes
 2.23 committed on or after that date.