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MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER

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Making the Anti-Idling Laws Enforceable

Formal Title: An Act reducing permitted idling times

Sponsor: Sen. Will Brownsberger

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Refile of H907

Background

Vehicle idling is currently addressed by MGL Ch. 90 Sec 16A, and 310 CMR Sec 7.11, but the law is very rarely enforced. In order to enforce this, a police officer would need to be present and monitor an idling vehicle for five full minutes, and is thus not practical. However, five minutes is not only unenforceable, it's also far in excess of what is necessary in all but very few situations (e.g. lift gate trucks, ambulances, armored vehicles, etc.). The vast majority of current idling is done by those who are unaware of the law.

- Tests show that **no more than 30 seconds of idling is needed to circulate the engine oil** before you can drive on cold days. Anything more just wastes fuel and produces needless greenhouse gas emissions.
- Once an engine is at operating temperature, **idling causes more pollution by running than by stopping and starting up again**. Studies indicate that the trade-off for light- and medium-duty gasoline powered vehicles is about 10 seconds (i.e. the vehicle will produce more pollution idling longer than 10 seconds than it will by shutting down and restarting the engine).
- **Idling doesn't allow the catalytic converter to reach optimum temperature**. A catalytic converter doesn't function at its peak until it reaches between 400°C and 800°C. The best way to warm the engine and all other components is to drive the vehicle.

This bill would

- Change the state's current permitted idling time from five minutes to two minutes.