

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5180

As of January 22, 2009

Title: An act relating to public transit vehicle stops at unmarked stop zones.

Brief Description: Permitting public transit vehicle stops at unmarked stop zones under certain circumstances.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen and Parlette.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/21/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Wendy Malkin (786-7434)

Background: Under current law, it is generally a traffic infraction to stop, park, or leave standing any vehicle upon the roadway in an unincorporated area, whether attended or not. However, exceptions to this rule are specified for the following: (1) the driver of any vehicle that is disabled such that it is impossible to avoid stopping and temporarily leaving the vehicle; (2) the driver of a public transit vehicle who temporarily stops the vehicle in order to receive and discharge passengers at a marked transit vehicle stop zone; and (3) the driver of a solid waste collection company who temporarily stops the vehicle as far to the right as practical in order to collect solid waste or recyclables.

Current Department of Transportation rules allow the secretary to approve unincorporated area public transit vehicle stop zones that are not wholly off the roadway if there is adequate sight distance and a suitable site off the roadway cannot be found.

Summary of Bill: Public transportation service providers, including certain nonprofit organizations, may allow the driver of a transit vehicle to stop upon a roadway in an unincorporated area momentarily to receive or discharge passengers at an unmarked stop zone. However, the driver must (1) stop the vehicle as far to the right side of the roadway as is practicable so as to not significantly impede traffic; (2) activate four-way flashing lights; and (3) stop at a portion of the highway with an unobstructed view for drivers approaching from behind the transit vehicle.

Appropriation: None.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Many public transit providers operating in unincorporated areas currently stop upon the roadway at unmarked stop zones to receive and discharge passengers, and bus drivers know how to do so safely. Unmarked stops upon the roadway are vital to passengers. There is often a great distance between marked stops in rural areas, and it is often dangerous to walk on the side of the road. Unmarked stops are also necessary to provide curb to curb service for disabled riders. It is not practical to site and develop marked stops in all the necessary locations because the cost is prohibitive.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Richard DeRock, Link Transit; Martha Rose, Bob Clay, Island Transit; Mark Carlin, Grays Harbor Transit; Karen Stites, ATU Local 1765; Tim Russ, Pacific Transit.