
Transportation Committee

HB 2470

Brief Description: Concerning the payment of certain monetary penalties by rental car businesses.

Sponsors: Representatives Pollet, Reykdal, Ryu, Wylie and Roberts.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires outstanding traffic infractions be paid for the registration of a rental car to be renewed by the Department of Licensing (DOL).
- Allows infractions issued to a rental vehicle to be forwarded to the DOL upon the first such infraction.
- Eliminates immunity for rental car businesses relating to infractions issued to rental vehicles.
- Allows rental car businesses to charge a renter for any such infractions under certain circumstances.

Hearing Date: 1/28/14

Staff: Andrew Russell (786-7143).

Background:

Motor vehicles operated in Washington must generally be registered with the Department of Licensing (DOL), and this registration must be renewed annually. The DOL will not renew a vehicle registration, however, if the registered owner has failed to pay any: standing, stopping, or parking violations; civil penalties for nonpayment of a toll charge bill; or infractions generated by an automated traffic safety camera. Local jurisdictions may forward to the DOL any finding of a municipality that the registered owner has either: (1) an unpaid civil penalty related to a toll charge bill; or (2) committed two or more infractions relating to the standing, stopping, or parking of a vehicle and failed to respond to the notice of infraction, pay a penalty, or failed to appear at a hearing to contest the infraction.

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.

Vehicles used as rental cars must also be titled and registered with the DOL, unless the vehicle was rented outside of the state and brought into the state, is being rented for a one-way trip out of the state, or is registered as part of an International Registration Plan. For rental vehicles registered with the DOL, their registrations must be renewed annually. However, local jurisdictions do not report to the DOL any outstanding infractions or civil penalties that are issued to rental vehicles. Finally, rental car businesses are protected against liability for such infractions or penalties if they provide the name and address of the person renting the vehicle at the time of the infraction or toll charge.

Summary of Bill:

The DOL may not renew the registration of a rental vehicle if there are any unpaid monetary penalties from a toll charge bill or infraction related to the stopping, standing, or parking of a vehicle. Any finding that such a monetary penalty has gone unpaid, or that a driver has failed to appear at a hearing to contest the infraction, may be forwarded to the DOL after only one such finding, if the infraction was issued to a rental vehicle. A rental car business is not relieved of their liability to pay any monetary penalty associated with an infraction or a toll charge bill; instead, the rental car business must pay such penalty in order to complete the renewal of the vehicle's registration. Nevertheless, the rental car business may charge the renter responsible by either: (1) adding the penalty to a subsequent rental by the same individual; or (2) charging the renter's credit card directly if the rental car business has provided notice of such possible charges.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.