

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 2433

As Passed House:

February 5, 1996

Title: An act relating to proper lane travel for heavy vehicles.

Brief Description: Facilitating smoother flow of traffic.

Sponsors: Representatives K. Schmidt, R. Fisher, Dickerson and Huff.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/16/96 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/5/96, 97-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 26 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Benton, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Skinner, Vice Chairman; R. Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Hatfield, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Brown; Buck; Cairnes; Chandler; Chopp; Elliot; Hankins; Horn; Johnson; McMahan; Ogden; Patterson; Quall; Robertson; Romero; D. Schmidt; Scott; Sterk and Tokuda.

Staff: Mary McLaughlin (786-7309).

Background: On any highway with two or more lanes in one direction, all vehicles are to remain in the right lane then available for traffic except when overtaking another vehicle, traveling at a speed greater than the traffic flow, moving left to allow for merging traffic, or preparing to turn left.

In the state of California, certain vehicles are restricted from using the left lane(s) on a multi-lane facility. On a highway with two lanes in the same direction, trucks must stay in the right lane except to pass. On a three-lane facility, a truck must remain in the right lane and use the center lane to pass. On a highway with four or more lanes in the same direction, a truck must stay in the first two right lanes and can pass only in the third lane. The restrictions apply not only to trucks, but also to any vehicle pulling a trailer, school buses, a farm vehicle transporting passengers, a vehicle transporting explosives, etc.

Summary of Bill: Vehicles over 10,000 pounds are prohibited from driving in the left lane on a highway with three or more lanes in the same direction. The exceptions are an authorized vehicle traveling in a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane or a vehicle preparing to turn left. (Ten thousand pounds is the figure used by the United States Department of Transportation in defining "commercial vehicle.")

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Prohibiting heavier vehicles from using the left lane may help ease the traffic congestion in the left lane.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Dave Peach, Department of Transportation; and Larry Pursley, Washington Trucking Association.