

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2506

As Reported By House Committee On:

Transportation

Title: An act relating to special license plates for funding a baseball stadium.

Brief Description: Removing authority for baseball stadium license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Robertson, R. Fisher, Sterk and K. Schmidt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/25/96, 1/29/96 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 20 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Benton, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Skinner, Vice Chairman; Backlund; Blanton; Buck; Cairnes; Chandler; Elliot; Hankins; Johnson; McMahan; Ogden; Quall; Robertson; Romero; D. Schmidt; Scott and Sterk.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Hatfield, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chopp; Horn and Tokuda.

Staff: Jennifer Joly (786-7305).

Background: Currently, the Department of Licensing (DOL) has the authority to issue special license plates; fees from special license plates are deposited in the motor vehicle fund. In order to earmark the fees for specific, nonlicensing purposes, DOL needs prior legislative approval.

During the 1995 Legislature's third special session, convened for the purposes of baseball stadium financing, EHB 2115 (Chapter 1, Laws of 1995, Third Special Session) was passed. Among other financing mechanisms, EHB 2115 authorized special baseball stadium license plates, revenues from which were earmarked for baseball stadium bond retirement. Of the \$30 annual special license plate fee, DOL was authorized to deduct up to \$2 for administration and collection expenses, plus the cost of plate production. EHB 2115 also provided that DOL issue a "certificate of participation" for each recipient issued a special baseball stadium license plate.

Summary of Bill: Authorization for a special baseball stadium license plate is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 22, 1996.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: As a matter of fiscal policy, the state should not be involved in the issuance of any special license plates because the cost of production is too high. The sales history of other special plate series does not reflect the optimistic sales forecasts noted by the interest groups. The primary purpose of license plates is vehicle identification which is hindered by special license plates with small logos and an independent numbering system.

Testimony Against: At the time of its inception, the special baseball stadium license plate was intended to generate money for financing of the baseball stadium, but not to the detriment of DOL. To that end, an amendment stating that no proceeds could be remitted for purposes of baseball stadium funding until such time as the department's plate production costs have been recovered may be in order. The popularity of the recently issued collegiate license plates is evidence that there is a market for special license plates. A baseball stadium license plate would be particularly popular at this time, given the Mariners' winning season.

Testified: Representative Eric Robertson, prime sponsor (pro); Jim Wadsworth, Department of Licensing (neutral); Rick Wickman, Seattle Mariners (con); and Andy Kaplowitz, activist citizen (con).