

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6487

As Passed House:
February 26, 1996

Title: An act relating to commercial driver's licenses.

Brief Description: Revising qualifications for commercial driver's licenses.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Owen and Prince; by request of Department of Licensing).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/21/96 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/26/96, 95-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. 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; Blanton; Brown; Buck; Cairnes; Chopp; Elliot; Hankins; Horn; Johnson; McMahan; Ogden; Patterson; Quall; Robertson; Romero; D. Schmidt; Scott; Sterk and Tokuda.

Staff: Gary Lebow (786-7304).

Background: Federal law requires operators of certain commercial motor vehicles to obtain a commercial driver's license (CDL). This includes operators of vehicles with 26,001 or more pounds gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) and vehicles under 26,001 pounds GVWR if they are transporting hazardous materials or carrying 16 or more passengers, including the driver. Current state law further requires a CDL if a person is operating a school bus, regardless of size and weight, although federal law requires a CDL in such cases only if the vehicle has a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds or is designed to carry 16 or more passengers, including the driver. State law must be at least as restrictive as the federal law to avoid penalties but can be more restrictive.

Changes and clarifications to the federal law are necessitating changes to the state law. Under current statute a school bus driver can test with a vehicle under 26,001 pounds GVWR or designed to carry fewer than 16 passengers and receive a CDL that permits operation of a vehicle carrying 16 or more passengers.

If not implemented, the state will lose 5 percent (\$3.5 million) of federal aid construction funds for the first year of noncompliance and 10 percent for subsequent years of noncompliance.

Summary of Bill: Two new CDL endorsements are added. The first new endorsement authorizes driving all vehicles carrying passengers, and the second new endorsement authorizes driving vehicles with a GVWR of less than 26,001 pounds carrying 16 or more passengers, including the driver.

Penalties for violating out-of-service orders (for example, driving a vehicle that is out of service because of defective equipment, etc.) are added to comply with the new federal legislation. These penalties consist of time periods of commercial driver license suspension.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on October 1, 1996.

Testimony For: These changes will keep Washington in compliance with federal rules and regulations.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Izzy Anaya, Department of Licensing.