

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2433

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 26, 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: 2/26/96 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Owen, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Goings, Morton, Oke, Prentice, Prince, Rasmussen, Schow, Sellar, Thibaudeau and Wood.

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 Amended Bill: The striking amendment prohibits vehicles over 10,000 pounds from driving in the left lane on a highway with three or more lanes in the same direction. The exceptions are: (a) an authorized vehicle traveling in a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane; (b) a vehicle preparing to turn left or a vehicle being directed left by a sign or flag person; (c) an emergency vehicle (police, fire, ambulance); or (d) a tow truck responding to a law enforcement call. The HOV lane is not considered the left-hand lane.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Emergency vehicles and tow trucks are added as exemptions. The HOV lane is not considered to be the left-hand lane.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Restricting the use of the left lane by heavy vehicles enhances the safety of the motoring public.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mike Ryherd, Teamsters (concerns); Steve Lindstrom, Community Transit (concerns); David Peach, WSDOT (pro).