

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6271

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 1, 1996

Title: An act relating to vehicles that have been rebuilt from salvage.

Brief Description: Expanding automotive title branding.

Sponsors: Senators Long and Owen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/23/96, 2/1/96 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6271 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Owen, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Haugen, Oke, Prince, Rasmussen, Schow, Sellar and Wood.

Staff: Roger Horn (786-7839)

Background: Insurers and self-insured vehicle owners are required to submit to the Department of Licensing (DOL) the title of vehicles that have been declared a total loss. If a totaled vehicle is subsequently rebuilt and the vehicle is under four years of age, the title and registration certificate issued for the vehicle are branded with the word "rebuilt."

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5685, passed in 1995, mandated a study, led by DOL, to examine the feasibility of displaying the "rebuilt" brand on the title and registration certificate of any rebuilt vehicle, regardless of age, and, in addition, the feasibility of differentiating on the certificates whether the vehicle had been declared a total loss due to cosmetic or structural damage. The study group recommended having the "rebuilt" brand apply to vehicles of any age without differentiating between cosmetic and structural damage.

Beginning January 1, 1997, the State Patrol, as part of the vehicle identification number (VIN) inspection required for all rebuilt vehicles, will affix or inscribe a marking on the driver's side door pillar indicating that the vehicle has been rebuilt. The door pillar markings will be applied to rebuilt vehicles of any age.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The requirement that titles and registration certificates of rebuilt vehicles be branded is expanded to include vehicles under six years of age. Markings indicating a vehicle has been rebuilt are only applied to the door pillars of vehicles under six years of age.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill required that titles and registration certificates of rebuilt vehicles of any age be branded.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 1996.

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

Testimony For: Consumers have a right to know if the vehicle they are purchasing has previously been declared a total loss. Many totaled vehicles over four years old are rebuilt and currently have no rebuilt brand on the title.

Testimony Against: Older vehicles may be declared a total loss even though they have only sustained minor damage. It is unlikely that badly damaged older vehicles will be rebuilt because they are not valuable enough to justify the cost to rebuild them. Having a branded title diminishes the value of a vehicle.

Testified: Senator Long, prime sponsor; Marsh Pugh, WSP (pro); Bill Hanson, WA State Troopers Assn (pro); Mike West, Ed Dollar, Autobody Craftsman Assn. (pro); Don Phelps, Auto Wreckers Assn. (pro); Dave Ducharme, Insurance Auto Auctions (pro); Renetta Wilson, State Farm Insurance (pro); Jim Boldt, WA Auto Dealers.