

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6348

As Passed Senate, February 13, 1996

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

Brief Description: Facilitating smoother flow of traffic.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Oke, Owen, Prince, Wood, Loveland, McCaslin, Moyer, Hochstatter, Johnson and Hale).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/30/96, 2/5/96 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/13/96, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6348 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Owen, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Goings, Haugen, Morton, Oke, Prentice, Prince, Rasmussen, Schow, 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 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: (1) a vehicle preparing to turn left; (2) a vehicle lawfully using an HOV lane; (3) an emergency vehicle (fire truck, ambulance, police); and (4) a tow truck responding to a law enforcement call. An HOV lane is not considered the left-hand lane of a roadway.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Trucks in the left lane are a safety issue. The greatest exposure to an accident for a truck is when changing lanes.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Oke, prime sponsor; Larry Pursley, WA Trucking Assn. (pro); Dave Peach, WSDOT (pro); Stu Halsan, WA Tow Truck Assn (pro).