

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5539

As Passed House-Amended:

April 8, 1997

Title: An act relating to accident reports.

Brief Description: Changing accident report requirements.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Oke and Horn; by request of Washington State Patrol).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation Policy & Budget: 4/1/97, 4/2/97 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House-Amended: 4/8/97, 98-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY & BUDGET

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 27 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Hankins, Vice Chairman; Mielke, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Blalock, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cooper, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Buck; Cairnes; Chandler; Constantine; DeBolt; Gardner; Hatfield; Johnson; Murray; O'Brien; Ogden; Radcliff; Robertson; Romero; Scott; Skinner; Sterk; Wood and Zellinsky.

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306).

Background: The driver of a vehicle that is involved in an accident in which there is an injury, death or damages that are more than the minimum amount established by the Washington State Patrol (WSP) must file an accident report within 24 hours of the accident. It is up to the discretion of the driver to file an accident report in other circumstances. The report is filed with the law enforcement jurisdiction in which the accident occurred. The original is sent to the WSP. In addition to the report filed by the driver, if a law enforcement officer is present at the scene or investigates the accident, the law enforcement officer will also file an accident report.

Summary of Bill: If a law enforcement officer completes an accident report, the drivers involved in the accident do not have to file a report. Reference to a driver's report has been deleted since not all accidents require an accident report to be filed.

Time for filing an accident report is four days instead of 24 hours. The reference to his— within the statute is changed to the chief's.— Reference to cause— of an accident on the report has been changed to the circumstances— of the accident.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This gives drivers involved in accidents additional time to file an accident report, especially if injuries or deaths are involved. The filing of only one accident report, either by the driver involved in the accident or the law enforcement officer investigating the accident, will reduce the number of reports to be filed. In addition, the new process of filing only one report supports the CRASH project that was started in the 1995-97 biennium and is scheduled for completion next biennium. The project will have the original accident report filed with the WSP. Other agencies presently receiving the report will have electronic access to the reports instead of each agency receiving a copy and maintaining separate accident report files and computer systems.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Bob Oke, prime sponsor; and Captain Marsh Pugh, Washington State Patrol.