

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5618

As Reported By House Committee On:
Transportation Policy & Budget

Title: An act relating to vehicles boarding ferries.

Brief Description: Regulating ferry queues.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Wood, Heavey, Winsley, Sheldon, Spanel, Oke and Kohl).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation Policy & Budget: 3/27/97, 4/3/97 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY & BUDGET

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 22 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; Buck; Chandler; Constantine; Gardner; Johnson; Murray; O'Brien; Ogden; Radcliff; Robertson; Romero; Scott; Skinner; Wood and Zellinsky.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Backlund; Cairnes; Hatfield and Sterk.

Staff: Reema Shawa (786-7301).

Background: The structural design and location of ferry docks creates problems for both the motorist intending to board the ferry and for any residences which are in close proximity to the ferry terminal. Ferry commuters generally arrive well ahead of a scheduled boarding in order to secure a spot on the ferry. This causes a lengthy queue to develop which quickly spills over onto the street, creating a parking lot atmosphere on a normally free flowing arterial. This occurrence makes exiting adjacent residential driveways difficult for residents; and under current law those residents have no legal recourse, as blocking a residential driveway is not a violation of the law. On the occasion when a queuing motorist leaves a gap open in front of a driveway, another vehicle will often move in to take advantage of the opportunity to advance up the queue.

Summary of Amended Bill: It is a traffic infraction for a driver of a motor vehicle intending to board a Washington State ferry to: (1) block a residential driveway while waiting to board the ferry; or (2) move in front of another vehicle in a queue already waiting to board the ferry, without the authorization of a state ferry system employee. Vehicles qualifying for preferential loading privileges are exempt from this subsection.

The Department of Transportation is required to mitigate those problems associated with lengthy ferry queues, including the blockage of residential driveways, by implementing appropriate and feasible procedures and infrastructural changes.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill: The engrossed substitute bill required persons who cut in line to move their vehicles to the end of the line. The amended bill deletes this penalty.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This policy will give strength to the enforcement around ferry terminals.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, prime sponsor; Terry McCarthy, Washington State Ferries; and Dave Peach, Department of Transportation.