

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6685

As Passed Senate, February 14, 1998

Title: An act relating to the powers and duties of commercial vehicle enforcement officers and commercial vehicle officers.

Brief Description: Defining powers of commercial vehicle officers.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Horn, Goings, Rasmussen, Prince, Prentice and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/3/98, 2/5/98 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/14/98, 43-5.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prince, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Goings, Haugen, Heavey, Horn, Morton, Oke, Prentice and Rasmussen.

Staff: Mary McLaughlin (786-7309)

Background: The forerunner to the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Section of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) was created in 1939. CVE is responsible for weight control and safety of operations for all commercial motor vehicles and drivers operating in the state, and the school bus safety program. CVE consists of civilian officers located in eight districts with a policy and administrative division in the Olympia headquarters.

Weighing, safety inspections, permit sales, and enforcement of operations are conducted at the five ports of entry (Spokane, Plymouth, Cle Elum, Ridgefield and Bow Hill) 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Similar functions are performed at 53 internal scales and other state highway locations. CVE weighs over 2.5 million vehicles per year.

The CVE program consists 173 civilian and commissioned officers. The section has two commissioned officers (a captain and lieutenant) who serve as division and section commanders, 141 commercial vehicle enforcement officers (CVEOs), 13 commercial vehicle officers (CVOs) and 17 trooper cadets. CVEOs and trooper cadets are trained in self-defense and fire arms; CVOs are trained in self-defense but do not carry guns because of physical reasons or personal choice. Although CVEOs and CVOs have medical training, it is the policy of the Patrol not to allow these officers to provide medical assistance or to direct traffic.

Officers within CVE may place drivers and vehicles out of service, at a safe location, for defective equipment, log book violations, weight and size violations, etc. Although these officers are sworn with limited authority and the CVEOs are armed for protection, they do not have the power of arrest. Drivers found to have outstanding warrants or who refuse to

submit to weighing or an inspection are released until they can be contacted by a commissioned officer with the powers of arrest.

Summary of Bill: CVEOs and CVOs may provide medical assistance and direct traffic in situation where the officers can be of assistance. The Patrol provides the training necessary to ensure the safety and success of the officers in their new duties.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This will cut down on the response time for rendering aid or directing traffic. Many times it can take 25-35 minutes for the nearest trooper to respond to an accident.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Haugen, prime sponsor; Chief Annette Sandberg, WSP (pro); Carl Himmelberger, IFPTE Local 17/WSP (pro); Rick Jensen, Troopers Association (pro); Tim Nickelson, WSPCVEO3 (pro).