

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5384

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**As Reported By House Committee On:**  
Transportation

**Title:** An act relating to studded tires.

**Brief Description:** Phasing in lightweight tire studs.

**Sponsors:** Senators Heavey, Benton, Haugen and Horn; by request of Department of Transportation.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Transportation: 3/25/99, 3/30/99 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Bill**  
**(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Phase out the use of older, heavier studded snow tires.
- Requires that wholesalers and tire dealers use only light-weight studs in snow tires.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Fisher, Democratic Co-Chair; K. Schmidt, Republican Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic 1st Vice Chair; Ericksen, Republican Vice Chair; Hankins, Republican Vice Chair; Buck; G. Chandler; Fortunato; Haigh; Hatfield; Hurst; Lovick; McDonald; Mielke; Mitchell; Morris; Murray; Ogden; Pflug; Romero; Schindler; Schual-Berke; Scott; Skinner and Wood.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative DeBolt.

**Staff:** Jeff Doyle (786-7322).

**Background:**

The state of Washington permits the use of studded tires from November 1 to April 1 of each year. A 1991 study found that 24 states allow the use of studded tires during specified time periods, while Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin prohibit studded tires.

Studies indicate that 14 percent to 35 percent of vehicles in Washington use typical studded tires. Typical studs have a steel body and are heavier than the newer generation studs currently mandated in most of northern Europe. As the tire wears, the stud protrusion increases, exacerbating road wear. Furthermore, the rate of road wear increases when the pavement is wet.

Recent study data indicate that over the course of its 30,000 mile useful life, a studded tire will remove between one-half and three-quarter tons of asphalt concrete mix. The cost of material replacement alone would range from \$8 to \$15 per tire, depending on material costs. The state of Alaska has estimated that repairing ruts caused by studded tires requires that pavement adjacent to the rutted lane also be extracted, driving the repair costs up \$40 to \$50 per studded tire.

The newest generation of lightweight studs are estimated to reduce road wear by at least 15 percent, without any decrease in performance.

The state of Oregon recently passed a law mandating the use of lightweight tire studs.

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**Summary of Amended Bill:**

Wholesalers must sell only lightweight studs to tire dealers in Washington, beginning on January 1, 2000. An exception is granted for wholesalers who currently have the heavier studs in inventory. Tire dealers may continue to sell the heavier metal studs until July 1, 2001.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Removes requirement outlawing use of heavier studs by motorists in 2005.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** This will reduce roadway damage by at least \$1 million per biennium.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Bob Gee, NW Tire Dealers; Doug Cox, Les Schwab; and Dave Bowers, Washington State Department of Transportation.