

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1156

As Passed House:

March 9, 1999

Title: An act relating to motor carrier drug testing programs.

Brief Description: Requiring motor carrier drug testing programs.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (Originally sponsored by Representatives Ericksen, Cooper, Mielke, Ogden, DeBolt and K. Schmidt).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/4/99, 2/24/99 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/9/99, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Penalties are established or increased for:
 - not having a drug testing program;
 - not complying with the federal drug testing program; or
 - knowingly using a driver that tests positive.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Fisher, Democratic Co-Chair; K. Schmidt, Republican Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic 1st Vice Chair; Edwards, Democratic 2nd Vice Chair; Ericksen, Republican Vice Chair; Hankins, Republican Vice Chair; DeBolt; Fortunato; Haigh; Hatfield; Hurst; Lovick; McDonald; Mielke; Mitchell; Morris; Murray; Ogden; Pflug; Radcliff; Romero; Schindler; Schual-Berke; Scott; Skinner and Wood.

Staff: Mary McLaughlin (786-7309).

Background:

Since January 1, 1996, federal law has required all commercial motor carriers to implement a company drug and alcohol program. Fifty percent of a company's drivers must be tested for drugs during the year and 25 percent for alcohol. A driver that tests positive must complete a rehabilitation program and be tested six times during the year. A driver who is involved in an accident is required to be tested for alcohol within two hours and drugs within eight hours. An employer that suspects a driver may be using drugs or alcohol can require the driver to submit to a reasonable suspicion test. The most common disqualification for drivers is driving with a suspended driver's license, followed by drug and alcohol use.

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) and the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) check for drug testing compliance when conducting a terminal audit at the carrier's place of business. The WSP's authority extends to motor freight carriers, while the UTC's jurisdiction includes solid waste collection companies, household goods carriers, and buses (fixed route, intercity, airporters, excursion, charter and not-for-profit). The WSP's administrative penalty for drug and alcohol testing was increased from \$100 to \$500 per violation last year. The UTC's administrative penalty is currently \$100 per violation.

Summary of Bill:

A penalty of up to \$1,500 per violation is imposed on any person or employer who does not implement or comply with the federal drug and alcohol use and testing program. A penalty of up to \$500 per violation is imposed for each employed driver that is not in compliance. A \$1,500 per violation penalty is imposed when an employer knowingly uses a driver that tests positive. The annual registration contains a statement that the owner or entity operating a commercial vehicle must have a drug and alcohol testing program in place that is in compliance with federal law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (Original bill) Tougher regulation will enhance the safety of the motoring public and places the responsibility for enforcement on the employers and owner-operator.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jay Lawley, Washington Trucking Association; and Teresa Osinski, Utilities and Transportation Committee.