

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5368

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As of February 4, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to eliminating head-on collisions on the most dangerous portions of state highways.

**Brief Description:** Eliminating head-on collisions on the most dangerous highways.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Stevens and Jacobsen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/4/99.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Ashley Probart (786-7319)

**Background:** The current approach to addressing traffic crashes on state highways is through the Washington State Department of Transportation's Collision Reduction and Collision Prevention Programs.

The Collision Reduction Program identifies and programs projects to reduce High Accident Locations (HALs), which are typically short stretches of highways (0.25 miles) that exhibit accident rates above the statewide average for similar highways. A second program component is the High Accident Corridors (HACs) element, which targets longer sections of highway (typically greater than one mile) that exhibit accident and severity rates above the statewide average.

The Collision Prevention Program identifies highway segments that:

- have a high probability of vehicles leaving the roadway;
- have high accident potential on at-grade intersections;
- address federal Interstate safety issues; and
- it includes high priority intersection improvements, such as new traffic signals and added turn lanes.

Safety treatments on two lane, undivided highways typically include one or more solutions and are generally determined by the physical location, accident history, and current and future traffic patterns. Examples of these solutions include lane widening, signing, guard rails, concrete barriers, divided medians, and two way left turn lanes.

**Summary of Bill:** State law on the method to be used for accident and accident risk reduction on two lane undivided highways is clarified. Concrete barriers must be installed on high risk sections of two-lane, undivided state highways. High risk sections are defined as two-lane, undivided highways on which there are two or more head on collisions within

a six mile distance per year. This would eliminate the estimated \$2,500 cost of clearing the road and handling the victims after each accident.

Multilane highways that already have natural medians and low risk highway sections are exceptions to this requirement.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 2, 1999.

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