

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5572

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, March 3, 1999

Title: An act relating to high-occupancy vehicle lane violations.

Brief Description: Clarifying status of HOV lane violations as traffic infractions.

Sponsors: Senators Heavey, Horn, Costa, Kohl-Welles, Kline, Patterson, Benton, Winsley and Oke; by request of Washington State Patrol.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/2/99, 3/3/99 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Benton, Costa, Eide, Finkbeiner, Heavey, Horn, Jacobsen, Johnson, Morton, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, Sellar, Sheahan, T. Sheldon, Shin and Swecker.

Staff: Paul Johnson (786-7839)

Background: District courts have ruled that reserving portions of highways for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) lanes is unenforceable because the law does not provide for enforcement action by police officers. The law was written to give authority to the Department of Transportation and local authorities to build, designate, or sign highway lanes as high occupancy use only. Wording must be added to the statute to allow law enforcement agencies to properly enforce these lane restrictions.

Summary of Bill: It is a traffic infraction to use HOV lanes in violation of restrictions placed on the use of such lanes by the proper authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This legislation is necessary to clarify that violating the HOV lane restrictions is a traffic infraction. It does not change the law or add any new penalty.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Heavey, prime sponsor; Captain Eric Robertson, Washington State Patrol.