

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2345

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to the duty of a driver in an accident.

Brief Description: Allowing noninjury accidents to clear the roadway.

Sponsors: Representatives Lovick, Delvin, O'Brien, Morell, Berkey, Casada, Conway and Wood.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/31/02, 2/6/02 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Drivers involved in noninjury accidents are required to move the vehicles as soon as possible off the roadway or freeway.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Fisher, Chair; Cooper, Vice Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Mitchell, Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Edwards, Ericksen, Haigh, Hankins, Hatfield, Jackley, Jarrett, Morell, Murray, Ogden, Reardon, Rockefeller, Romero, Simpson, Sullivan, Wood and Woods.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Holmquist, Mielke, Schindler and Skinner.

Staff: Penny Nerup (786-7335).

Background:

Under current law persons involved in noninjury accidents are required to stop the vehicles at the scene of the accident and to remain at the scene until all necessary information (name, address, insurance, driver's license) is exchanged. Failing to stop or comply with the information exchange is a gross misdemeanor.

In 2000 the Washington State Patrol partnered with the Department of Transportation and the Traffic Safety Commission to alleviate congestion by moving vehicles involved in noninjury accidents off the road as soon as possible. This program is known informally as the "steer it and clear it plan."

Summary of Bill:

The "steer it and clear it plan" is codified.

Drivers involved in noninjury accidents are required to move the vehicles off the roadway or freeway as soon as possible. Drivers are required to remain at a suitable location until necessary information has been exchanged. Law enforcement or a representative of the Department of Transportation may have a vehicle, cargo or debris removed from the roadway without incurring liability.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Noninjury accidents cause a lot of congestion. In addition, the collisions caused by back-ups from noninjury accidents are often more severe than the original.

Concerns were raised about determining liability if vehicles are moved before locating the positions of the vehicles.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Lovick, prime sponsor; Toby Rickman, Department of Transportation; and Glenn Cramer, Washington State Patrol.

(With concerns) Mark Call, State Farm Insurance.