

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5091

As Passed Senate, March 12, 2001

Title: An act relating to vehicles boarding ferries.

Brief Description: Regulating ferry queues.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Oke, Spanel, Gardner and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/22/01, 2/6/01 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/12/01, 43-3.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Eide, Finkbeiner, Jacobsen, Kastama, McAuliffe, McDonald, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, T. Sheldon, Shin and Swecker.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Benton.

Staff: Chris Reykdal (786-7321)

Background: The structural design and location of ferry docks creates problems for both the motorist intending to board the ferry and for any residences which are in close proximity to the ferry terminal. Ferry commuters often arrive well ahead of a scheduled boarding time in order to secure a spot on the ferry. This causes a lengthy queue to develop which quickly spills over onto the street, creating a parking lot atmosphere on a normally free flowing street. This occurrence makes exiting adjacent residential driveways difficult for residents and, under current law, those residents have no legal recourse since blocking a residential driveway is not a violation of the law. On the occasion when a queuing motorist leaves a gap open in front of a driveway, another vehicle will often move in to take advantage of the opportunity to advance up the queue.

Summary of Bill: It is a traffic infraction for a driver of a motor vehicle intending to board a Washington State ferry to: (1) block a residential driveway while waiting to board the ferry; or (2) move in front of another vehicle in a queue already waiting to board the ferry without the authorization of a state ferry system employee. Vehicles qualifying for preferential loading privileges are exempt from this subsection. For a vehicle which moves in front of another vehicle, there is an additional penalty that requires the driver to move his or her vehicle to the end of the ferry queue.

The Department of Transportation must mitigate the problems associated with lengthy ferry queues, including the blockage of residential driveways, by implementing appropriate and feasible procedures and infrastructure changes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This legislation gives law enforcement specific authority to address the problems associated with lengthy ferry lines. Certain spots are perennial problems and the department is working to improve those areas.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Suzanne Sinclair, Island County citizen (pro); Bill Hanson, Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs (pro w/amendment); Rick Jensen, Washington State Patrol Troopers Association (pro); and Terry McCarthy, Washington State Ferries (pro).