
Transportation Committee

HB 1802

Brief Description: Concerning collector vehicles.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Simpson, Sullivan and Moeller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows an individual to purchase up to two collector vehicles per year produced in foreign countries that are rated for at least 40 miles per gallon as collector vehicles.
- Exempts the collector vehicles from emission testing in motor vehicle emission testing areas.
- Requires the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to review the new collector vehicle and make recommendations prior to the 2014 legislative session.

Hearing Date: 2/11/09

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306)

Background:

Many manufacturers produce vehicles in foreign countries that are not offered for sale in the United States. Vehicles sold in some of the foreign markets are smaller vehicles and before the manufacturers will offer them for sale in the United States, they want to make sure there is a viable market for their vehicles.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is the agency that issues and enforces the federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS). If a vehicle was manufactured to comply with the FMVSS, it can be imported into the United States free of restrictions. The NHTSA maintains a list of these vehicles.

If a vehicle is less than 25 years old and not certified by its manufacturer to comply with the FMVSS, then it is up to the NHTSA to determine whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency makes those determinations on its own initiative or on the basis of a petition from a

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

registered importer, or a person who has a contract with a registered importer. The petitions must specify that the vehicle is substantially similar to a vehicle that was certified by its original manufacturer as conforming to all applicable FMVSS. If the vehicle is capable of being readily altered to conform to those standards, or if there is no substantially similar U.S. certified vehicle and the vehicle has safety features that comply with, or are capable of being altered to comply with, the FMVSS, the agency will make a determination based on the safety data available for the vehicle. Import eligibility decisions are made on a make, model, and model year basis.

Any vehicle that is at least 25 years old is exempt and can be imported into the United States regardless of whether it conforms to all applicable FMVSS. Nonresidents of the United States and United States citizens living abroad may temporarily import motor vehicles not meeting FMVSS for a period not to exceed one year.

In Washington, the Washington State Patrol establishes vehicle standards to be met, but in most cases, the federal standards are adopted. In Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane counties, emissions testing is required due to those areas needing to meet air quality standards. Vehicles five to 25 years old are required to have an emissions test every two years. Certain hybrid vehicles that have an efficiency rating of at least 50 miles per gallon for city driving are exempt, along with vehicles that are less than five years old, over 25 years old, and scooters and motorcycles.

Summary of Bill:

An individual may purchase up to two collector vehicles per year that are production vehicles manufactured by a major vehicle manufacturer that meet the following criteria:

- rated for at least 40 miles per gallon;
- not currently produced in the United States;
- the purchaser is not a vehicle dealer; and
- the vehicle is not purchased for resale.

The Department of Licensing will title these vehicles as collector vehicles regardless of age and will issue collector plates. The initial fees are valid for the life of the vehicle. If the vehicle becomes a production vehicle in the United States, the existing collector vehicles prior to production in the United States will retain their collector vehicle status.

These vehicles are exempt from emissions testing in motor vehicle emissions testing areas.

Prior to the 2014 legislative session, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee is required to review this new collector vehicle section and make a recommendation whether to maintain or discontinue the section.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.