

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6207

As Passed House - Amended:

March 3, 2010

Title: An act relating to allowing local governments to create golf cart zones.

Brief Description: Allowing local governments to create golf cart zones.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senator Haugen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/17/10, 2/26/10 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/10, 96-2.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Cities or counties may create golf cart zones by ordinance or resolution on roads that have a speed limit of 25 miles per hour or less.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Liias, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Campbell, Driscoll, Eddy, Ericksen, Finn, Flannigan, Herrera, Johnson, Klippert, Kristiansen, Moeller, Morris, Nealey, Rolfes, Sells, Shea, Simpson, Springer, Takko, Upthegrove and Wood.

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306).

Background:

Under Washington law, it is a traffic infraction for any person to drive or move a motor vehicle on any public road if the vehicle does not meet safety and equipment standards specified by federal code, state statute, or agency rule.

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.

There are two types of neighborhood electric vehicles:

- Neighborhood electric vehicles (NEV) - NEVs are defined as being capable of traveling at least 20 miles per hour (mph), but not more than 25 mph. These vehicles must meet federal safety and equipment standards for low speed vehicles. Equipment standards for low-speed vehicles include headlights and tail lights, a windshield, mirrors, turn signals, and seat belts.
- Medium speed electric vehicles (MEV) - MEVs are defined as being capable of traveling at least 30 mph, but not more than 35 mph. These vehicles do not meet the safety and equipment standards of the higher speed vehicles, but must meet the requirements of the lower speed vehicles if they are to be operated on public roads.

Most golf carts, when originally manufactured, have a top speed of 20 mph.

Summary of Amended Bill:

A golf cart is defined as a gas-powered or electric-powered four-wheel vehicle originally designed and manufactured for operation on a golf course and has a speed attainable in one mile of not more than 20 mph.

Cities or counties may create golf cart zones by ordinance or resolution on roads that have a speed limit of 25 mph or less.

Every person operating a golf cart in a golf cart zone is granted all rights and is subject to all of the rules of the road applicable to a driver of a motor vehicle. Other than the rules of the road, golf carts and golf cart drivers within golf cart zones are not subject to other motor vehicle provisions, including provisions on non-highway and off-road vehicles, vehicle licensing, driver licensing, and child restraint system use. The golf carts that are operated in golf cart zones must have reflectors, rearview mirrors, and seatbelts.

The person operating the golf cart must be at least 16 years old and must have completed a driver's education course or previous experience as a licensed driver. A person who has had a revoked license may not drive a golf cart in a golf cart zone on public roads.

Local jurisdictions that create golf cart zones may restrict the operation of golf carts to anytime from a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise. In addition, the jurisdiction may require a decal to be displayed on golf carts and may charge a fee for the decal.

The legislative authority of a city or county may prohibit the operation of golf carts in designated bicycle lanes that are within a golf cart zone. The city or county that authorizes a golf cart zone must clearly identify the zone with signage that complies with the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Accidents that involve golf carts operated within golf cart zones must file accident reports in compliance with existing statutes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) None.

(With concerns) Presently you can use golf carts on private roads. Orting, Washington has a golf cart zone pilot underway. Golf carts do have to follow the rules of the road, but are not required to have insurance or file accident reports. Including all license revocations and suspensions is recommended, since the bill does not cover, for example, persons where their driver license has been revoked for the third time. Requiring persons using a golf cart in golf cart zones to wear seatbelts is recommended. In other places in the country there have been incidents where people have fallen out or have been thrown from a golf cart in golf cart zones.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Jason Berry, Washington State Patrol.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.