

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1802

As of April 2, 2009

Title: An act relating to collector vehicles.

Brief Description: Concerning collector vehicles.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Hudgins, Simpson, Sullivan and Moeller).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/05/09, 65-32.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/25/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Wendy Malkin (786-7434)

Background: It is unlawful to operate a motor vehicle on public highways in Washington without first registering the vehicle through the Department of Licensing (DOL) and displaying a current vehicle license plate on the vehicle. Unless a vehicle qualifies for an exception, vehicle registration fees must be paid each year to keep the registration current, and license plates must be replaced every seven years.

The DOL issues special plates, including plates for collector vehicles. To qualify for collector plates a vehicle must be more than 30 years old, capable of operating on the highway, and owned and operated as a collector vehicle. A vehicle licensed under the collector vehicle provision can be used only for participation in club activities, exhibitions, tours, parades, and occasional pleasure driving. Collector plates are good for the life of the vehicle, and the plates are not renewed annually.

Vehicle emissions testing is required every two years in Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane Counties with some exceptions. Exceptions include vehicles newer than five years and older than 25 years, certain hybrid vehicles, motorcycles, and collector vehicles.

Generally, a person may not permanently import a vehicle less than 25 years old into the United States unless it is certified to meet the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) by its original manufacturer. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issues and enforces FMVSS. A vehicle less than 25 years old and not certified by its manufacturer to comply with the FMVSS may be lawfully imported if an exception is

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made by NHTSA. In considering whether a noncertified vehicle can be lawfully imported, NHTSA considers (1) whether the vehicle is substantially similar to a motor vehicle of the same model year that was manufactured for sale in the United States and is certified to comply with FMVSS; and (2) whether the vehicle is capable of being readily altered to comply with FMVSS.

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) establishes vehicle standards for our state, and any vehicle that complies with FMVSS will comply with WSP standards.

Summary of Bill: An individual may purchase up to two collector vehicles per year that are production vehicles manufactured by a major vehicle manufacturer if the vehicle is rated for at least 40 miles per gallon, is not currently produced in the United States, is not purchased by a vehicle dealer or for resale, and meets federal clean air standards at the time of importation.

The DOL must title and register these vehicles as collector vehicles regardless of age, and it must issue collector plates. The initial fees paid for the registration and plates are valid for the life of the vehicle. If the vehicle becomes a production vehicle in the United States, the collector vehicle will retain its collector vehicle status.

Collector vehicles in production in countries outside the United States that are rated for at least 40 miles per gallon are exempt from vehicle emissions testing requirements.

The provisions of the act apply to registrations due or to become due on or after January 1, 2010.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The diesel smart car gets between 80-90 miles per gallon, but you can't buy one in the U.S. There are 86 models of high-mileage production cars that are for sale in other countries, such as the Ford Ka, that are not for sale in the U.S. In Washington, we have a statute for collector vehicle plates. This statute could be used to license these high-mileage foreign cars if people can get them into the U.S. We should be able to license these cars in Washington. These cars are probably safer than many cars currently licensed under the collector statute.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Hudgins, prime sponsor.