

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2598

As Reported by House Committee On: Transportation

Title: An act relating to authorizing the use of certain cargo extensions that connect to a recreational vehicle frame.

Brief Description: Authorizing the use of certain cargo extensions that connect to a recreational vehicle frame.

Sponsors: Representatives Orcutt and Clibborn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/25/16, 2/3/16 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the addition of a cargo extension to a motor home or travel trailer by attaching to the frame that meets specific criteria.
- Specifies that the cargo extensions are not trailers that pivot on a hitch, but instead attach to the motor home or travel trailer frame and become part of the frame of the motor home or travel trailer.
- Specifies the equipment that is required for cargo extensions.
- Prohibits a motor home or travel trailer from having a trailer or secondary cargo extension or unit attached to the cargo extension.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.
Signed by 24 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harmsworth, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregerson, Hayes, Hickel, Kochmar, McBride, Moeller, Morris, Pike, Riccelli, Rodne, Rossetti, Sells, Shea, Stambaugh, Tarleton and Young.

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306).

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.

Background:

In Washington it is not legal to pull more than one trailer at a time behind a motor vehicle, except for a motor carrier that has a combination consisting of a tractor and two trailers in which the combined length does not exceed 61 feet. The definition of a "trailer" in statute includes every vehicle without motive power designed for being drawn by or used in conjunction with a motor vehicle constructed so that no appreciable part of its weight rests upon or is carried by such motor vehicle.

On the market are carriers that attach to the left and right sides of the frame of a recreational vehicle that do not pivot on a trailer hitch as a trailer, but become a part of the recreational vehicle through the way it is connected. These also have a axle that acts as a tag axle to safely carry the weight of the cargo. Current statutes do not address recreational vehicle cargo extensions.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The substitute bill specifies that a cargo extension is not a trailer, that it connects to the left and right side of a motor home or travel trailer frame and becomes part of the frame of the motor home or travel trailer. The cargo extension does not pivot on a hitch, and has an axle with two wheels that act like a tag axle to safely carry the weight of the cargo.

The substitute bill requires that a cargo extension must have at least two tail lamps mounted on the rear, which when lighted can be visible from a distance of 1,000 feet. Tail lights must be located at a height of not more than 72 inches and not less than 15 inches.

The substitute bill exempts cargo extensions from being equipped with brakes, provided that the gross weight of the cargo extension does not exceed 3,000 pounds and the total weight of the cargo extension does not exceed 40 percent of the gross weight of the towing vehicle.

The substitute bill requires that a cargo extension is equipped with fenders, covers, flaps, or splash aprons adequate for minimizing the spray or splash of water or mud from the roadway to the rear of the cargo extension.

The substitute bill prohibits a motor home or travel trailer from having a trailer or secondary cargo extension or unit attached to the cargo extension.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill clarifies that a "cargo extension" is a device that connects to the left and right side of a motor home or travel trailer frame.

The substitute bill requires that a cargo extension must have at least two tail lamps mounted on the rear, which when lighted can be visible from a distance of 1,000 feet. Tail lights must be located at a height of not more than 72 inches and not less than 15 inches.

The substitute bill exempts cargo extensions from being equipped with brakes, providing that the gross weight of the cargo extension does not exceed 3,000 pounds and the total weight of the cargo extension does not exceed 40 percent of the gross weight of the towing vehicle.

The substitute bill requires that a cargo extension is equipped with fenders, covers, flaps, or splash aprons adequate for minimizing the spray or splash of water or mud from the roadway to the rear of the cargo extension.

The substitute bill prohibits a motor home or travel trailer from having a trailer or secondary cargo extension or unit attached to the cargo extension.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2016.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The cargo extension provides additional capacity. The extension is not a trailer, and does not pivot on a hitch. The wheel underneath gives some support and also keeps the back end of the cargo extension from hitting the ground going in and out of driveways.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) There are some equipment recommendations to make the cargo extensions safe on the roadways. Even though the pictures of the cargo extensions showed the extensions with tail lights, the extensions should be required to have tail lights so they can be seen just like any other vehicle. It is important to be able to see the recreational vehicle's license plate, and not to have more than one cargo extension attached to a recreation vehicle. The Washington State Patrol would be happy to work with the prime sponsor on language to take care of the agency's concerns.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Orcutt, prime sponsor.

(Other) Monica Alexander, Washington State Patrol.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.