

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1832

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Relations

Title: An act relating to the electrification of the Washington public vehicle fleet.

Brief Description: Concerning the electrification of the Washington public vehicle fleet.

Sponsors: Representatives Macri, Fitzgibbon, Ryu, Stanford, Santos, Doglio and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 2/13/19, 2/22/19 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Joint Transportation Committee to conduct a study on how Washington governments can achieve a fully electric vehicle fleet.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Gregerson, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Dolan and Hudgins.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Goehner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Mosbrucker and Smith.

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

The Department of Enterprise Services (DES) manages a fleet of over 4,000 state-owned vehicles. Some state agencies manage their own fleets as well. The DES's Fleet Operations provides repair and maintenance services for all state-owned vehicles.

In 2007 the Legislature instituted a new requirement for state agencies and local governments to use electricity or biofuel to satisfy their fuel usage for operating publicly owned vessels,

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vehicles, and construction equipment, to the extent practicable as determined by rules adopted by the Department of Commerce (Commerce). This requirement went into effect on June 1, 2015, for state agencies and June 1, 2018, for local governments. Rules were adopted by the Commerce to define what is "practicable," to create exceptions allowed under statute, and to manage compliance.

In December 2015 Governor Jay Inslee announced a new initiative to accelerate Washington's acquisition of electric vehicles. The Governor required that at least 20 percent of the state's new passenger vehicle purchases would be electric vehicles by 2017.

The first long-range electric vehicles managed by the DES were put into use on April 27, 2017. The DES website reports that its long-range electric vehicles have traveled 818,003 miles since then, saving over 34,000 gallons of fuel (based on a fleet average of 24 miles per gallon). The Department of Transportation has invested about \$2.5 million in installing charging locations near interstates in Washington.

Governor Inslee announced an updated initiative in September 2018 to increase the state's electric vehicle acquisition to at least 50 percent by 2020. The Legislature allocated \$5.45 million for this purpose from the state's settlement with Volkswagen, who had been illegally circumventing emissions rules.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) is directed to conduct a study on how Washington governments can achieve a fully electric vehicle fleet. The study must encompass:

- an inventory of existing fleets;
- a review of currently available electric vehicles;
- the projected costs and economic benefits of converting to an electric fleet;
- potential financing mechanisms; and
- an analysis of infrastructure upgrades that would be necessary.

The JTC must provide a report to the Legislature by December 31, 2019.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill changes the scoping plan to a study on the electrification of public fleets, and it transfers the responsibility to analyze this issue from the DES to the JTC. It removes all requirements that public vehicles be electric by a certain date. The substitute bill also requires a report to the Legislature by December 31, 2019.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date of Substitute 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) Climate change is real and the urgency to address it is pressing. Transportation is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gases, and the public sector needs to be a leader for this issue. The 2007 law has been ineffective—it leaves too much discretion to fleet managers, and less than 1 percent of publicly owned vehicles are electric. While there are costs to purchasing electric vehicles, the cost to taxpayers to operate electric vehicles are lower over the life of the car. The price of electric vehicles is coming down as technology becomes cleaner. This bill makes financial sense and saves taxpayers money. Modern electric cars are of superior reliability. The worldwide impacts of using elements for battery production do not approach the scale of the problems with using oil, which is damaging everywhere. This bill is very aggressive, but it sets the table for this conversation.

(Opposed) This is an unfunded mandate with a stick but no carrots. The 2007 law recognized that there are many different zero-emission renewable fuels. The technology of electric buses is not proven, especially in extreme heat and cold conditions. The unreliability of buses results in a lack of service and additional money spent to have backup vehicles. Fuel costs for electric buses are higher than diesel. The infrastructure needed to charge a fleet of 100 buses is huge and puts a strain on the power grid. Charge stations will need to be placed on every route. The bill does not recognize the unique nature of utility work in which vehicles have multiple uses and often time is of the essence and they cannot take the time to stop and charge. The DES does not have the expertise to decide whether there are adequate electric vehicle options on the market.

(Other) This bill has good intent but raises concerns because it is mandatory and the costs of acquiring cars and developing infrastructure are high. The DES does not have the expertise to undertake this scoping plan—it would need to be contracted out, which is expensive. The DES also does not have jurisdiction over local governments, so its rules may not apply. The scoping plan is due in 2021, but purchases for 2023 cars occur in 2022, so there is not much time between the scoping plan and its implementation. There would need to be significant infrastructure upgrades to meet the requirements of this bill. This is an important conversation to be having, but there are concerns.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Macri, prime sponsor; Matthew Metz, Coltura; Greg Rock, Carbon Washington; Leah Missik, Climate Solutions; Jay Donnaway, Seattle Electric Vehicle Association; and Louis Wolf.

(Opposed) Justin Leighton, Washington State Transit Association; Paul Koleber, Intercity Transit; and Nicolas Garcia, Washington Public Utility Districts Association.

(Other) Logan Bahr, Association of Washington Cities; MariJane Kirk, Department of Enterprise Services; and Chris Herman, Washington Public Ports Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.