
Agriculture & Ecology Committee

SB 6329

Brief Description: Exempting certain vehicles powered by electricity and gasoline from emission control inspections.

Sponsors: Senators Regala, Honeyford, Fraser, Jacobsen and Winsley.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Exempts hybrid motor vehicles from the Department of Ecology's emission inspection program

Hearing Date: 2/26/02

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Department of Ecology (DOE) states in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) that gasoline powered motor vehicles emit significant quantities of hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen, in addition to serving as the primary emitters of carbon monoxide. Federal emissions standards are designed to reduce motor vehicle emissions; however, the DOE reports that the effectiveness of these efforts are reduced through deterioration, maladjustment, and tampering. In their administrative rules, DOE states that emission inspections serve to identify vehicles that are high polluting and vehicles with tampered or missing emission controls. Once the vehicles are identified, the DOE seeks to reduce their emissions if it can be accomplished at a reasonable cost.

The DOE conducts emission inspections on motor vehicles registered in the portions of the state designated by DOE as "emission contributing areas." An area of the state may only be identified as an emission contributing area if the DOE first finds that the area is within a "non-compliance" area for motor vehicle emissions. Currently in the WAC, the DOE has listed the cities of Seattle, Bellevue, Spokane, Tacoma, Vancouver, and Everett as non-compliance areas. Within each non-compliance area, the DOE identifies by zip code the smallest land area containing registered motor vehicles significantly contributing to air quality degradation. Vehicles registered within the identified zip codes that are older than five years

or newer than twenty-five years are subject to emission testing biennially.

The owner of a vehicle registered in an emissions contributing area must pay a fee to have an emission inspection conducted. The amount of that fee is set in rule by the DOE, and must be applicable state-wide or throughout an emissions control area. The fee may not exceed fifteen dollars, and surplus money collected is paid to the state general fund. Fees must be calculated to compensate the contracted inspection facility owner and to offset the general fund appropriation made to the DOE to cover the administrative costs of the inspection program.

Certain vehicles are statutorily exempt from the emission inspection requirement. These include vehicles manufacturer before 1967, motorcycles, farm vehicles, collector cars, electric cars, and vehicles fueled by propane, compressed natural gas, or liquid petroleum gas.

Summary of Bill:

Hybrid motor vehicles are exempt from the Department of Ecology's emission inspection program. These vehicles must obtain an Environmental Protection Agency rating of at least fifty miles per gallon during city driving in order to earn the exemption. Hybrid vehicles are vehicles that used both electricity and gas for propulsion.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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