

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5812

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Highways & Transportation, March 4, 2003

Title: An act relating to driving in the left lane.

Brief Description: Facilitating free flow of traffic.

Sponsors: Senators Horn, Haugen, Swecker, Finkbeiner and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Highways & Transportation: 2/25/03, 3/4/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5812 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Horn, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Swecker, Vice Chair; Esser, Finkbeiner, Haugen, Kastama, Mulliken, Oke, Prentice and Spanel.

Staff: Greg Doss (786-7341)

Background: Current law provides a quantitative measure to identify when a "slow moving vehicle" is causing traffic delay on a two-lane highway. In such cases, a slow moving vehicle must turn off the roadway when behind it are five or more vehicles formed in a line. Current law also allows drivers on two-lane highways to briefly exceed the speed limit to pass slow moving vehicles.

Current law prohibits persons driving in the left lane of multi-lane highways to proceed at such a slow speed as to impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic. However, no quantitative measure is provided to define when traffic is impeded.

Summary of Substitute Bill: On multi-lane highways, a vehicle in the left lane is impeding traffic when behind it are two or more vehicles formed in a line. Persons driving on multi-lane highways may briefly exceed the speed limit to pass a vehicle delaying traffic in the left lane.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill would have allowed a person in the left lane to speed to avoid delaying traffic. The original bill would not have allowed a driver to exceed the speed limit while passing a vehicle in the left lane of a multi-lane highway.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: There are times when vehicles in the left lane must delay two or more vehicles. The Legislature should find a better measure for delay of traffic. The State Patrol supports a measure that addresses vehicles traveling under the speed limit.

Testified: Merton Cooper (Citizen), Capt. Glenn Cramer (WSP).