

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1504

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, February 23, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to abandoned vehicle auctions.

**Brief Description:** Changing abandoned vehicle auction notice requirements.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Simpson, Woods and Lovick).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/10/06, 97-1.

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/22/06, 2/23/06 [DP].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Jacobsen, Vice Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Benson, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Eide, Esser, Finkbeiner, Kastama, Mulliken, Oke, Sheldon, Spanel, Swecker and Weinstein.

**Staff:** Dory On (786-7321)

**Background:** When an abandoned vehicle is towed, the tow truck operator must file an abandoned vehicle report with the Department of Licensing (Department). Within 24 hours after the impoundment, the tow truck operator must send by certified mail, with return receipt requested, a notice of custody and sale to the legal and registered owners.

After 15 days from the date of mailing the notice of custody and sale, if the vehicle remains unclaimed, and has not been listed as a stolen vehicle or a suspended license impound, then the tow truck operator can conduct a sale of the vehicle at public auction. The tow truck operator must publish a notice of the date, place, and time of the auction in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the vehicle is located, not less than three days and no more than 10 days before the date of the auction.

The notice must contain a description of the vehicle including the make, model, year, and license number, and that a three hour public viewing period is available prior to the auction.

**Summary of Bill:** A notice of public auction for the sale of abandoned vehicles must include a method to contact the tow truck operator who impounded the vehicles.

For purposes of public auction notice, a newspaper of general circulation may be a commercial, widely circulated, free, classified advertisement circular not affiliated with the registered tow truck operator.

The viewing period prior to the auction is changed from three hours prior to: a) one hour prior if 25 or fewer vehicles are to be auctioned; b) two hours if more than 25 and fewer than 50 vehicles are to be auctioned; and c) three hours if 50 or more vehicles are to be auctioned.

The public auction notice must specify the length of the applicable viewing period.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** Tow truck operators perform a public service by impounding abandoned vehicles. However, abandoned vehicles generally have very little re-sale value. Often they are worth not more than a few dollars when sold for scrape metal. This bill will cut costs incurred by the tow truck operator to sell abandoned vehicles at public auction.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Stu Halsan, Towing and Recovery Association of Washington; Paul Bressi, Towing and Recovery Association of Washington.