

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5200

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, March 1, 2005

Title: An act relating to the department of transportation identifying, managing, and maintaining heavy haul industrial corridors within port districts; and adding a new section to chapter 46.44 RCW.

Brief Description: Facilitating sealed ocean-going container movement.

Sponsors: Senators Kastama, Swecker, Haugen, Franklin, Regala, Oke and Shin; by request of Department of Transportation.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/24/05, 3/1/05 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5200 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Benson, Eide, Esser, Kastama, Mulliken, Oke, Spanel and Weinstein.

Staff: Hayley Gamble (786-7452)

Background: Any vehicle that exceeds current weight law restrictions may only travel on state highways if they receive a special overweight permit from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). WSDOT evaluates whether the state highway system to be traveled upon can sustain the excess weight, without any undue roadway stress, before granting overweight permits. The maximum allowable weight on state highways is 105,000 pounds and must be spread over various axle combinations as listed in current regulations.

Vehicles transferring large shipping containers over state highways to different locations within a port district's property sometimes exceed legal weights. These overweight vehicles require a special overweight permit. Overweight permits are only available if a vehicle's load is considered non-divisible, i.e. cannot reasonably be broken into smaller loads.

Several states consider sealed, ocean-going containers as non-divisible. Washington State law does not specify if such containers are considered non-divisible. If these containers are considered non-divisible then they would be eligible for an overweight permit.

Summary of Substitute Bill: At the request of a port commission, WSDOT may enter into agreements with port authorities to establish short heavy haul industrial corridors within a port district's property.

WSDOT may issue special permits to overweight vehicles operating on state highways in the heavy haul corridor at a rate of \$100 per month or \$1,000 per year. The entity operating vehicles that move containers in the port district is responsible for paying the overweight permit fee. Except for administrative costs, all proceeds from these permits must be deposited into the motor vehicle fund.

Overweight vehicles must still comply with other weight regulations, including not exceeding 105,500 pounds total weight, and axle and tire requirements. Within a designated heavy haul corridor freight containers used in international trade are considered a non-divisible load.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

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: The Federal Highway Administration allows containers used in international trade to be considered non-divisible. WSDOT can approve or deny an overweight permit based on the ability of roads to withstand heavy loads. State route 509 in Tacoma is engineered to withstand heavy loads as it was built with freight traffic in mind. There is a heavy haul corridor established within Port of Tacoma district property that covers all city roads. State route 509 would complete the heavy haul corridor at the Port of Tacoma.

Testimony Against: None.

Other: There are some concerns with language in the bill. Concerns have been expressed by union members.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Kastama, Barry Diseth, WSDOT; Steve Stivala, MacMillan Piper; Jim Filkins, Konoike-Pacific; Lisa Thatcher, Port of Tacoma. OTHER: Gordon Baxter, International Longshore & Warehouse Union.