

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5616

As of February 20, 2013

Title: An act relating to the use of farm vehicles on public highways.

Brief Description: Concerning the use of farm vehicles on public highways.

Sponsors: Senators Sheldon, Smith, Schoesler, Hargrove, Hatfield, Hewitt and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/19/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7429)

Background: Farm vehicles that are used incidentally on public highways are exempt from vehicle registration, but a farmer must apply for a farm exempt decal. A farm exempt decal must be displayed on the farm vehicle so that it is clearly visible from outside the vehicle. A farm exempt decal allows a farm vehicle to be operated within a 15-mile radius of the farm where it is principally used or garaged.

Summary of Bill: The 15-mile radius restriction is removed. A farm exempt vehicle may be used incidentally on public highways in the vicinity of the farm where it is principally used to travel between farms or other locations to engage in activities that support farming operations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill tightens and clarifies how farm vehicles may be used on public highways. This is important for farmers who may need to rent equipment from a town that is farther than 15 miles or share equipment between farms that are outside that radius. This allows them to be safer by using equipment that is

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appropriate for the job. Many small farms work off a patchwork of property and it is not uncommon for the parcels to be more than 15 miles apart. This would clarify that the farmer could travel between the locations.

Persons Testifying: Holli Johnson, WA State Grange; Scott Dilley, WA Farm Bureau.