

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5849

As of February 27, 2013

Title: An act relating to electric vehicle charging stations.

Brief Description: Concerning electric vehicle charging stations.

Sponsors: Senators Tom, Frockt, Keiser, Hatfield and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/26/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: Electric vehicles operate, either partially or exclusively, on electrical energy from the grid or an off-board source, that is stored on-board for motive purposes. Some electric vehicles are equipped to recharge the battery by connecting to the power grid. In 2009, the Legislature passed a bill that required all cities and counties statewide to allow motor vehicle battery charging stations as a use in all zones, except residential, resource, or critical areas. Additionally, the 2009 legislation directed the Puget Sound Regional Council and the Department of Commerce to develop guidance for local governments regarding the development of an electric vehicle charging network. According to the Municipal Research Services Center, 16 local governments have adopted ordinances related to electric vehicle charging.

The West Coast Electric Highway initiative has developed over the past couple of years. It is a network of electric vehicle fast-charging stations located every 25 to 50 miles along Interstate 5 and other major roadways and stretches from The Canadian border to the Mexican border. There are 12 stations in Washington that are associated with the West Coast Electric Highway. Additionally, there are also electric vehicle charging stations provided by both public and private entities throughout Washington that are not part of the West Coast Electric Highway initiative.

The Washington State Department of Transportation periodically adopts the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), published by the Federal Highway Safety Administration. MUTCD provides guidance on a variety of traffic control devices to state

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and local traffic engineers. MUTCD contains a standard sign for use by governments to indicate the location of an electric vehicle charging station.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Electric vehicle charging station is defined as a parking space that provides an electrical outlet for the purpose of charging a plug-in electric vehicle.

Electric vehicle charging stations must be indicated by a vertical sign identifying the space as an electric vehicle charging station, indicating that parking is for electric vehicles that are charging only. The sign must be consistent with MUTCD. The parking space must also be indicated by green pavement markings.

It is a parking infraction with a penalty of \$250 for any person to park a vehicle in an electric vehicle charging station if the vehicle is not connected to an electrical outlet. The parking infraction applies to public charging stations and private charging stations that do not charge a fee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: We support this bill because it touches on four major areas that would assist in the adoption of the electric vehicle technology: (1) it safeguards unobstructed and timely access to charging stations; (2) it protects the financial investments that have been made in the charging station network; (3) it serves as an opportunity to educate the general public that at times is inconsiderate and parks in one of the spaces, which is the same as parking a car in front of a gas pump; and (4) the level of the fine provides a significant deterrent to blocking a charging station. The systems that tell electric vehicle owners where there are charging stations can often tell if it is being used to charge another vehicle, but it cannot tell if it is blocked by a combustion engine vehicle. Washington has been a leader in preparing for the deployment of this technology and can have a positive impact all across the country. This bill will help deal with the situation where an internal combustion engine had blocked the charging station. We call it icing the charging station. So this bill is a de-icing bill. We would like to offer some fine tuning to some of the language to bring it inline with other language the Puget Sound Regional Council and others have worked on to provide consistency.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jeff Finn, Kevin McMahon, Seattle Electric Vehicle Assn.; Daniel Davids, Plug In America.