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**HOUSE BILL 2483**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Van Werven, Goodman, and Ormsby

AN ACT Relating to vehicle impoundment and redemption following arrest for driving or being in physical control of a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs; amending RCW 46.55.113 and 46.55.360; creating a new section; and repealing RCW 46.55.350.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature enacted "Hailey's law" in 2011, which requires impoundment of a vehicle when the driver is arrested for driving or being in physical control of the vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and also prevents the impaired driver from redeeming the impounded vehicle for a period of twelve hours. In its findings, the legislature reasoned that vehicle impoundment both increases deterrence and prevents an impaired driver from accessing the vehicle for a specified time. In addition, it noted that vehicle impoundment provides an appropriate measure of accountability for registered owners who allow impaired drivers to drive or control their vehicles, but it also allows the registered owners to redeem their vehicles once impounded. The legislature additionally found that any inconvenience on a registered owner is outweighed by the need to protect the public.

The Washington state supreme court recently decided in *State v.* *Villela* that the mandatory impoundment component of the statute violates the state Constitution. In coming to this conclusion, the court determined that the Constitution requires that the arresting officer make a discretionary determination that impoundment is reasonable and that there are no reasonable alternatives to impoundment.

The legislature finds that, even without mandatory impoundment in every case, there are still many circumstances in which an officer making an arrest for impaired driving or physical control of a vehicle while under the influence will determine that impoundment is reasonable under the circumstances and within the constitutional limitations. In such cases, it is still appropriate and necessary for the protection of the public to prevent redemption of the impounded vehicle for a minimum of twelve hours. To this end, the legislature intends to clarify that, in cases in which a vehicle is lawfully impounded following the driver's arrest for impaired driving or physical control of a vehicle while under the influence, the twelve hour restriction on redemption of the vehicle still applies.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.55.113 and 2011 c 167 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Whenever the driver of a vehicle is arrested for a violation of RCW 46.20.342 or 46.20.345, the vehicle is subject to summary impoundment, pursuant to the terms and conditions of an applicable local ordinance or state agency rule at the direction of a law enforcement officer.

(2) In addition, a police officer may take custody of a vehicle, at his or her discretion, and provide for its prompt removal to a place of safety under any of the following circumstances:

(a) Whenever a police officer finds a vehicle standing upon the roadway in violation of any of the provisions of RCW 46.61.560, the officer may provide for the removal of the vehicle or require the driver or other person in charge of the vehicle to move the vehicle to a position off the roadway;

(b) Whenever a police officer finds a vehicle unattended upon a highway where the vehicle constitutes an obstruction to traffic or jeopardizes public safety;

(c) Whenever a police officer finds an unattended vehicle at the scene of an accident or when the driver of a vehicle involved in an accident is physically or mentally incapable of deciding upon steps to be taken to protect his or her property;

(d) Whenever the driver of a vehicle is arrested and taken into custody by a police officer;

(e) Whenever the driver of a vehicle is arrested for a violation of RCW 46.61.502 or 46.61.504;

(f) Whenever a police officer discovers a vehicle that the officer determines to be a stolen vehicle;

((~~(f)~~)) (g) Whenever a vehicle without a special license plate, placard, or decal indicating that the vehicle is being used to transport a person with disabilities under RCW 46.19.010 is parked in a stall or space clearly and conspicuously marked under RCW 46.61.581 which space is provided on private property without charge or on public property;

((~~(g)~~)) (h) Upon determining that a person is operating a motor vehicle without a valid and, if required, a specially endorsed driver's license or with a license that has been expired for ninety days or more;

((~~(h)~~)) (i) When a vehicle is illegally occupying a truck, commercial loading zone, restricted parking zone, bus, loading, hooded-meter, taxi, street construction or maintenance, or other similar zone where, by order of the director of transportation or chiefs of police or fire or their designees, parking is limited to designated classes of vehicles or is prohibited during certain hours, on designated days or at all times, if the zone has been established with signage for at least twenty-four hours and where the vehicle is interfering with the proper and intended use of the zone. Signage must give notice to the public that a vehicle will be removed if illegally parked in the zone;

((~~(i)~~)) (j) When a vehicle with an expired registration of more than forty-five days is parked on a public street.

(3) When an arrest is made for a violation of RCW 46.20.342, if the vehicle is a commercial vehicle or farm transport vehicle and the driver of the vehicle is not the owner of the vehicle, before the summary impoundment directed under subsection (1) of this section, the police officer shall attempt in a reasonable and timely manner to contact the owner of the vehicle and may release the vehicle to the owner if the owner is reasonably available, as long as the owner was not in the vehicle at the time of the stop and arrest and the owner has not received a prior release under this subsection or RCW 46.55.120(1)((~~(a)~~))(b)(ii).

(4) The additional procedures outlined in RCW 46.55.360 apply to any impoundment of a vehicle under subsection (2)(e) of this section.

(5) Nothing in this section may derogate from the powers of police officers under the common law. For the purposes of this section, a place of safety may include the business location of a registered tow truck operator.

((~~(5)~~)) (6) For purposes of this section "farm transport vehicle" means a motor vehicle owned by a farmer and that is being actively used in the transportation of the farmer's or another farmer's farm, orchard, aquatic farm, or dairy products, including livestock and plant or animal wastes, from point of production to market or disposal, or supplies or commodities to be used on the farm, orchard, aquatic farm, or dairy, and that has a gross vehicle weight rating of 7,258 kilograms (16,001 pounds) or more.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.55.360 and 2011 c 167 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) When a driver of a vehicle is arrested for a violation of RCW 46.61.502 or 46.61.504 and the officer directs the impoundment of the vehicle under RCW 46.55.113(2)(e), ((~~the vehicle is subject to summary impoundment and except for a commercial vehicle or farm transport vehicle under subsection (3)(c) of this section,~~)) the vehicle must be impounded and retained under the process outlined in this section. With the exception of the twelve-hour hold mandated under this section, the procedures for notice, redemption, storage, auction, and sale shall remain the same as for other impounded vehicles under this chapter.

(b) If the police officer directing that a vehicle be impounded under ((~~this section~~)) RCW 46.55.113(2)(e) has:

(i) Waited thirty minutes after the police officer contacted the police dispatcher requesting a registered tow truck operator and the tow truck responding has not arrived, or

(ii) If the police officer is presented with exigent circumstances such as being called to another incident or due to limited available resources being required to return to patrol,

the police officer may place the completed impound order and inventory inside the vehicle and secure the vehicle by closing the windows and locking the doors before leaving.

(c) If a police officer ((~~directing that a vehicle be impounded under this section~~)) has secured the vehicle and left it pursuant to (b) of this subsection, the police officer and the government or agency employing the police officer shall not be liable for any damages to or theft of the vehicle or its contents that occur between the time the officer leaves and the time that the registered tow truck operator takes custody of the vehicle, or for the actions of any person who takes or removes the vehicle before the registered tow truck operator arrives.

(2)(a) When a ((~~driver of a~~)) vehicle is ((~~arrested for a violation of RCW 46.61.502 or 46.61.504~~)) impounded under RCW 46.55.113(2)(e) and the driver is a registered owner of the vehicle, the impounded vehicle may not be redeemed within a twelve-hour period following the time the impounded vehicle arrives at the registered tow truck operator's storage facility as noted in the registered tow truck operator's master log, unless there are two or more registered owners of the vehicle or there is a legal owner of the vehicle that is not the driver of the vehicle. A registered owner who is not the driver of the vehicle or a legal owner who is not the driver of the vehicle may redeem the impounded vehicle after it arrives at the registered tow truck operator's storage facility as noted in the registered tow truck operator's master log.

(b) When a ((~~driver of a~~)) vehicle is ((~~arrested for a violation of RCW 46.61.502 or 46.61.504~~)) impounded under RCW 46.55.113(2)(e) and the driver is a registered owner of the vehicle, the police officer directing the impound shall notify the driver that the impounded vehicle may not be redeemed within a twelve‑hour period following the time the impounded vehicle arrives at the registered tow truck operator's storage facility as noted in the registered tow truck operator's master log, unless there are two or more registered owners or there is a legal owner who is not the driver of the vehicle. The police officer directing the impound shall notify the driver that the impounded vehicle may be redeemed by either a registered owner or legal owner, who is not the driver of the vehicle, after the impounded vehicle arrives at the registered tow truck operator's storage facility as noted in the registered tow truck operator's master log.

(3)(a) When a ((~~driver of a~~)) vehicle is ((~~arrested for a violation of RCW 46.61.502 or 46.61.504~~)) impounded under RCW 46.55.113(2)(e) and the driver is not a registered owner of the vehicle, the impounded vehicle may be redeemed by a registered owner or legal owner, who is not the driver of the vehicle, after the impounded vehicle arrives at the registered tow truck operator's storage facility as noted in the registered tow truck operator's master log.

(b) When a ((~~driver of a~~)) vehicle is ((~~arrested for a violation of RCW 46.61.502 or 46.61.504~~)) impounded under RCW 46.55.113(2)(e) and the driver is not a registered owner of the vehicle, the police officer directing the impound shall notify the driver that the impounded vehicle may be redeemed by a registered owner or legal owner, who is not the driver of the vehicle, after the impounded vehicle arrives at the registered tow truck operator's storage facility as noted in the registered tow truck operator's master log.

(c) If the vehicle is a commercial vehicle or farm transport vehicle and the driver of the vehicle is not the owner of the vehicle, ((~~before the summary impoundment directed under subsection (1) of this section~~)) prior to determining that no reasonable alternatives to impound exist and directing impoundment of the vehicle under RCW 46.55.113(2)(e), the police officer ((~~shall attempt~~)) must have attempted in a reasonable and timely manner to contact the owner ((~~of the vehicle~~)), and ((~~may~~)) release the vehicle to the owner if the owner ((~~is~~)) was reasonably available((~~, as long as the owner was not in the vehicle at the time of the stop and arrest~~)).

(d) The registered tow truck operator shall notify the agency that ordered that the vehicle be impounded when the vehicle arrives at the registered tow truck operator's storage facility and has been entered into the master log starting the twelve‑hour period.

(4) A registered tow truck operator that releases an impounded vehicle pursuant to the requirements stated in this section is not liable for injuries or damages sustained by the operator of the vehicle or sustained by third parties that may result from the vehicle driver's intoxicated state.

(5) For purposes of this section "farm transport vehicle" means a motor vehicle owned by a farmer and that is being actively used in the transportation of the farmer's or another farmer's farm, orchard, aquatic farm, or dairy products, including livestock and plant or animal wastes, from point of production to market or disposal, or supplies or commodities to be used on the farm, orchard, aquatic farm, or dairy, and that has a gross vehicle weight rating of 7,258 kilograms (16,001 pounds) or more.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  RCW 46.55.350 (Findings—Intent) and 2011 c 167 s 2 are each repealed.

**--- END ---**