

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5487

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Transportation

**Title:** An act relating to parking at rest areas.

**Brief Description:** Concerning parking at rest areas.

**Sponsors:** Senator King; by request of Department of Transportation.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Transportation: 3/20/23, 4/4/23 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Bill**  
**(As Amended By Committee)**

- Changes the requirements for signage pertaining to parking time limits and impoundment at safety rest areas.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Timmons, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Hutchins, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Low, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Robertson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berry, Bronoske, Chapman, Cortes, Dent, Doglio, Duerr, Entenman, Goehner, Griffey, Hackney, Klicker, Mena, Orcutt, Ramel, Ramos, Taylor, Volz, Walsh and Wylie.

**Staff:** Christine Thomas (786-7142).

**Background:**

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) owns and operates 47

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safety rest areas across the state, most are open to the public 24 hours a day. Features of these safety rest areas include motor vehicle parking, commercial truck and recreational vehicle parking, Americans with Disabilities Act–accessible restrooms, drinking water, traveler information, vending machines, picnic areas, public telephones, and more. The WSDOT estimates more than 24 million visitors use the state's safety rest areas annually.

It is unlawful for any person to park a vehicle, which includes trailers, campers, and motorcycles, that is not disabled for more than eight hours within a 24-hour period at a state-owned safety rest area. Disabled vehicles may be parked in safety rest areas up to 48 hours before they are subject to mandatory impoundment. Commercial vehicles may be parked at safety rest areas up to one hour beyond federally mandated rest periods. The WSDOT may designate zones within a safety rest area with shorter parking time limits to maximize efficiency and safety.

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) is charged with enforcing these safety rest area parking limitations to the maximum extent practicable. The WSP, under its authority to remove vehicles from the highway system including safety rest areas, may remove these unauthorized vehicles directly through contracted towing operators appointed by the WSP and called on a rotational or other basis. The WSDOT must post appropriate signage at all safety rest areas regarding parking time limits and impoundment. The signage must include the times a vehicle may be impounded as an unauthorized vehicle; and the name, telephone number, and address of the towing firm where the vehicle may be redeemed.

For the purposes of statutes related to towing and impoundment, "unauthorized vehicle" is defined as a vehicle that is subject to impoundment after being left unattended in public or private locations for indicated periods of time.

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### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

Signage regarding safety rest area parking time limits is required to be posted near each entrance, and on the property in a clearly conspicuous and visible location to all who park on the property. The signage must indicate a phone number for contacting the law enforcement agency, or the WSDOT to locate the impounded vehicle.

### **Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

In addition to the signage requirements in the amended bill, the original bill made vehicles that are not disabled subject to impoundment for violating safety rest area parking limits, in addition to disabled vehicles. The original bill also amended the definition of unauthorized vehicle related to towing and impoundment to include vehicles subject to impoundment after being left unattended, and in violation of safety rest area parking time limits. The amended bill removes those provisions.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill is about keeping rest areas open and available to trucks and truck drivers that need parking to meet federal truck operating requirements. Truck parking is at a crisis point and the industry is highly dependent on rest areas when truck stops are in short supply. Rest areas in Washington were forced to close because unauthorized vehicles were remaining parked longer than the standard safety rest area parking time limits creating health and safety problems for truck drivers, as well as the general public. Signage is needed so people know what the laws are and where they can retrieve their impounded vehicles through the WSDOT or local law enforcement.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Curtis King, prime sponsor; Travis Snell, Washington State Department of Transportation; and Sheri Call, Washington Trucking Associations.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.