

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5909

As of January 22, 2024

Title: An act relating to electric vehicle impoundment and storage.

Brief Description: Concerning electric vehicle impoundment and storage.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, J., Lovick and McCune.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/23/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes registered tow truck operators to apply for cost reimbursement for towing and storing electric vehicles.
- Establishes a three-year grant program to aid registered tow truck operators retrofit storage facilities to accommodate electric vehicles.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has previously issued guidelines for tow truck operators when towing and storing electric vehicles, especially those vehicles involved in a significant crash or that experienced a battery fire. Guideline recommendations include towing the electric vehicle on a flatbed truck or storing the vehicle at least 50 feet away from any other structure, vehicle, or combustibles.

In 2021, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) completed an investigation of three electric vehicle crashes resulting in postcrash fires and one noncrash fire involving an electric vehicle. The NTSB also examined national and international standards established

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to maximize the safety of electric vehicles. The NTSB also reviewed emergency guidance documents supplied by vehicle manufacturers to mitigate the safety risks to first and second responders, including tow truck operators, who deal with electric vehicle crashes and high-voltage lithium-ion battery fires. The NTSB report findings were consistent with previously issued guidelines by NHTSA.

Summary of Bill: Registered tow truck operators may apply to Department of Licensing for cost reimbursement for towing, transporting, and storing electric vehicles from public or private property. If approved, cost reimbursement is funded by the electric vehicle account and is limited to no more than \$10,000 per vehicle.

The Department of Commerce must establish a three-year grant program to aid registered tow truck operators retrofit storage facilities with additional facility protections to accommodate electric vehicles, including the installation of containment bays or other storage facilities approved or recommended by NHTSA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2024.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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