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**SENATE BILL 5072**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Warnick and Lovick

AN ACT Relating to abandoned vehicles sold at auctions conducted by registered tow truck operators; amending RCW 82.04.040; adding a new section to chapter 82.04 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 82.08 RCW; creating new sections; repealing 2023 c 416 ss 5 and 6, and 2019 c 357 ss 1 and 3 (uncodified); and providing an effective date.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 82.04.040 and 2023 c 416 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, "sale" means any transfer of the ownership of, title to, or possession of property for a valuable consideration and includes any activity classified as a "sale at retail" or "retail sale" under RCW 82.04.050. It includes lease or rental, conditional sale contracts, and any contract under which possession of the property is given to the purchaser but title is retained by the vendor as security for the payment of the purchase price. It also includes the furnishing of food, drink, or meals for compensation whether consumed upon the premises or not. The term "sale" does not include the transfer of the ownership of, title to, or possession of:

(a) An animal by an animal rescue organization in exchange for the payment of an adoption fee; or

(b) ((~~An abandoned vehicle sold by a registered tow truck operator to a successful bidder at public auction or, if there is no successful bidder, to a licensed vehicle wrecker, hulk hauler, or scrap processor, as provided in RCW 46.55.130. Nothing in this subsection (1)(b) may be construed as providing an exemption from:~~

~~(i) The tax imposed by chapter 82.12 RCW on the use of an abandoned vehicle by any consumer; or~~

~~(ii) Taxes imposed under this chapter and chapter 82.08 RCW on automobile towing and automobile storage services provided by a registered tow truck operator; or~~

~~(c)~~)) Food, drink, or meals furnished by a senior living community to tenants as part of a rental or residency agreement for which no separate charge is made, regardless of whether the tenant is a resident for purposes of chapter 18.20 or 18.390 RCW.

(2) "Casual or isolated sale" means a sale made by a person who is not engaged in the business of selling the type of property involved.

(3)(a) "Lease or rental" means any transfer of possession or control of tangible personal property for a fixed or indeterminate term for consideration. A lease or rental may include future options to purchase or extend. "Lease or rental" includes agreements covering motor vehicles and trailers where the amount of consideration may be increased or decreased by reference to the amount realized upon sale or disposition of the property as defined in 26 U.S.C. Sec. 7701(h)(1), as amended or renumbered as of January 1, 2003. The definition in this subsection (3) must be used for sales and use tax purposes regardless if a transaction is characterized as a lease or rental under generally accepted accounting principles, the United States internal revenue code, Washington state's commercial code, or other provisions of federal, state, or local law.

(b) "Lease or rental" does not include:

(i) A transfer of possession or control of property under a security agreement or deferred payment plan that requires the transfer of title upon completion of the required payments;

(ii) A transfer of possession or control of property under an agreement that requires the transfer of title upon completion of required payments, and payment of an option price does not exceed the greater of $100 or one percent of the total required payments; or

(iii) Providing tangible personal property along with an operator for a fixed or indeterminate period of time. A condition of this exclusion is that the operator is necessary for the tangible personal property to perform as designed. For the purpose of this subsection (3)(b)(iii), an operator must do more than maintain, inspect, or set up the tangible personal property.

(4)(a) "Adoption fee" means an amount charged by an animal rescue organization to adopt an animal, except that "adoption fee" does not include any separately itemized charge for any incidental inanimate items provided to persons adopting an animal, including food, identification tags, collars, and leashes.

(b) "Animal care and control agency" means the same as in RCW 16.52.011 and also includes any similar entity operating outside of this state.

(c) "Animal rescue group" means a nonprofit organization that:

(i)(A) Is exempt from federal income taxation under 26 U.S.C. Sec. 501(c) of the federal internal revenue code as it exists on July 23, 2017; or

(B) Is registered as a charity with the Washington secretary of state under chapter 19.09 RCW, whether such registration is required by law or voluntary;

(ii) Has as its primary purpose the prevention of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, or homelessness of animals; and

(iii) Exclusively obtains dogs, cats, or other animals for placement that are:

(A) Stray or abandoned;

(B) Surrendered or relinquished by animal owners or caretakers;

(C) Transferred from other animal rescue organizations; or

(D) Born in the care of such nonprofit organization other than through intentional breeding by the nonprofit organization.

(d) "Animal rescue organization" means an animal care and control agency or an animal rescue group.

(e) "Senior living community" means any facility or campus operated by a person licensed or registered under chapter 18.20 or 18.390 RCW.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 82.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The gross proceeds of sales of abandoned vehicles by a registered tow truck operator under RCW 46.55.130 are not subject to tax under this chapter as the sale of automobile towing and storage services. Rather, such gross proceeds of sales of abandoned vehicles by a registered tow truck operator are subject to tax under this chapter as the sale of tangible personal property.

(2) A registered tow truck operator may deduct from amounts taxable under subsection (1) of this section any surplus proceeds required by law to be transmitted to the department of licensing as required under RCW 46.55.130 and 46.55.200.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "abandoned vehicle" and "registered tow truck operator" have the same meanings as provided in RCW 46.55.010.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 82.08 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A registered tow truck operator must collect the applicable taxes under RCW 82.08.020 when making a retail sale of abandoned vehicles at a public auction or to a licensed vehicle wrecker, hulk hauler, or scrap processor, as provided in RCW 46.55.130, unless the sale is specifically exempt from tax under this chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, such sales are treated solely as the sale of tangible personal property and not as the sale of automobile towing and storage services.

(2) A person selling an abandoned vehicle at public auction as an agent of a registered tow truck operator is subject to the tax collection obligation described in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "abandoned vehicle" and "registered tow truck operator" have the same meanings as provided in RCW 46.55.010.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that licensed auto wreckers, scrap processors, and hulk haulers generally make wholesale purchases of abandoned vehicles from registered tow truck operators and therefore would not owe sales tax on the acquisition of abandoned vehicles notwithstanding this act. The legislature does not intend to modify the tax characterization of these vehicle acquisitions by auto wreckers, scrap processors, and hulk haulers with the enactment of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  RCW 82.32.805 and 82.32.808 do not apply to this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The following acts or parts of acts are each repealed:

(1) 2023 c 416 s 5 (uncodified);

(2) 2023 c 416 s 6 (uncodified);

(3) 2019 c 357 s 1 (uncodified); and

(4) 2019 c 357 s 3 (uncodified).

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect January 1, 2026.

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