

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5276

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to impounded vehicles.

Brief Description: Requiring notice for impounded vehicle disposition.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Nelson, Moore, Thorsness and Oke).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Transportation, March 27, 1991, DP;
Passed House, April 9, 1991, 92-0;
Passed Legislature, 92-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 22 members:
Representatives R. Fisher, Chair; Betrozoff, Ranking
Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority
Member; Basich; Brough; Cantwell; Cooper; G. Fisher; Forner;
Haugen; Horn; P. Johnson; R. Johnson; Jones; Kremen;
Mitchell; Nelson; Orr; Prentice; Prince; Schmidt; and
Zellinsky.

Staff: Brad Lovaas (786-7307).

Background: Tow truck service is defined as any vehicle transported by a tow truck operator. A tow truck operator who impounds a vehicle is responsible for notifying the legal and registered owners. Current law authorizes no less than a \$50 per day judgment against anyone who authorizes an invalid impound. A registered owner who has completed a seller's report is relieved of liability of future claims against that vehicle. Any vehicle impounded by a registered tow truck operator is considered an impound.

Summary of Bill: The Washington State Patrol's authority over vehicles in a tow truck operator's possession is limited to those that were impounded.

Current statutory language relating to law enforcement release of vehicle owner information to a registered tow

truck operator is revised. The term "immediately" is changed to within 6-12 hours of the impound.

Language is clarified on the filing of a seller's report to ensure that someone who has lawfully filed a seller's report is not liable for towing and storage fees.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill would refine and streamline current statute.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Al Runte, Washington Tow Truck Association; and Heather Hamilton, Department of Licensing.