

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5276

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Transportation*

**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.

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**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.