

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5041

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SYNOPSIS AS ENACTED

Brief Description: Permitting motorcyclists to use Washington state patrol approved audio headsets and earphones.

SPONSORS: Senators Sellar, Owen, Patterson, West, Vognild, Bauer and Thorsness.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

BACKGROUND:

In 1977 the Legislature prohibited motor vehicle operators from "wearing ... headset[s] or earphones connected to any electronic device capable of receiving a radio broadcast or playing a sound recording...." The legislation restricted motorists from using devices which would prevent them from hearing sirens, horns and other sounds crucial to the safe operation of motor vehicles. However, long-time users of these systems in other states have argued that such devices add substantially to the safe operation of motorcycles because operators can rely on voice communication rather than hand signals when communicating with members of their traveling party, and receive timely information about road conditions from their CB. Currently, many states and the Washington State Patrol permit the use of headsets.

SUMMARY:

Motorcyclists will be permitted to wear a helmet with built-in headsets or earphones as approved by the Washington State Patrol.

VOTES ON FINAL PASSAGE:

Senate	45	0
House	95	0

EFFECTIVE: July 28, 1991