

---

**Transportation Committee**

---

**HB 2065**

**Brief Description:** Facilitating license plate technology advances.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Simpson and Edwards.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Authorizes the use of a non-standard background on license plates.
- If vehicle owners wish to keep their current license plate number, they must pay a retention fee of \$20.
- 25 cents is added to current vehicle registration charges, the revenue of which is to be deposited into the newly created License Plate Technology Account for use in funding license plate technologies.
- The Department of Licensing is required to offer license plate design services to organizations sponsoring a new special license plate series. The cost to acquire these services would be \$1,500.

**Hearing Date:** 2/28/03

**Staff:** Reema Griffith (786-7301).

**Background:**

The current license plate production system used by the Department of Licensing (DOL) has been in place since the 1920's and involves a labor intensive process of manually stamping each plate set, with the labor being provided by the inmates at the Walla Walla State Penitentiary.

On a national level, big strides have been made on the technology end of license plate manufacturing and several states are taking advantage of this. Computer driven manufacturing processes have been developed which allow all license plate information to be inputted and managed via a computer, and printed out almost instantaneously using digital technology. While this technology is attractive and would increase flexibility in manufacturing, the cost of implementing this type of technology in Washington State is yet to be known and absent a revenue source, would likely be a costly endeavor to implement under

current funding scenarios.

**Summary of Bill:**

Authorizes the use of a non-standard background on vehicle license plates allowing for variations in color and design, provided that the plate is legible and clearly identifiable as a Washington State plate.

In providing for the replacement of license plates every seven years, the DOL is required to offer to vehicle owners the option of retaining their current license plate number. If an owner chooses to do so, the DOL must charge a retention fee of \$20, the revenue of which is to be deposited into the Multimodal Transportation Account.

An additional 25 cents is added to the current \$3.50 filing fee paid by all vehicle owners at the time of registration. Proceeds from this fee are to be deposited into the newly created License Plate Technology Account. This is an appropriated account and expenditures from this account must support current and future license plate technology and systems integration upgrades.

The DOL must offer license plate design services to organizations that are sponsoring a new special license plate series or are seeking to redesign the appearance of an existing special license plate. The DOL must charge \$1,500 for this service, which would include one original license plate design and up to five additional renditions of the original design. If an organization wants more than five renditions, the DOL must charge \$500 per additional rendition. The revenue generated by this service must be deposited into the Multimodal Transportation Account.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 19, 2003.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.