

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5499

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Highways & Transportation, March 5, 2003

Title: An act relating to transferring accident data processing to the department of transportation.

Brief Description: Transferring accident data processing to the department of transportation.

Sponsors: Senators Oke, Haugen, Horn and Winsley; by request of Department of Transportation.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Highways & Transportation: 2/11/03, 3/5/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5499 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Horn, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Swecker, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Haugen, Jacobsen, Kastama, Mulliken, Oke, Prentice and Spanel.

Staff: Greg Doss (786-7341)

Background: Under current law, the Washington State Patrol (WSP) is responsible for receiving, processing and distributing reports filed by citizens involved in motor vehicle accidents. The 2001 Legislature transferred the responsibility for administering collision records from the State Patrol to the Department of Transportation. The transfer is effective on July 1, 2003. The WSP, WSDOT and Department of Licensing collision records transition team drafted SB 5499 to enact the statutory changes necessary to implement the transfer.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Coroners and other public officials responsible for processing collision reports must forward such reports to the Department of Transportation. All statutory responsibility for adopting rules, collecting, reporting and administering collision reports is transferred from the Washington State Patrol to the Secretary of Transportation.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Under the substitute bill, the Chief of the Washington State Patrol retains the authority to set the collision reporting dollar threshold. The statutory collision reporting dollar threshold is raised to \$700 to align it with the current WAC collision reporting dollar threshold. The WSP must provide recommendations when WSDOT is designing collision reporting forms. The WSP retains the authority to conduct collision reporting related investigations. The WSP may acquire compiled reports of collision data processed by the WSDOT. The WSP must retain a copy of any accident report taken by one of its officers.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2003.

Testimony For: The WSDOT and WSP support the agency request legislation.

Testimony Against: As a neutral party, the WSP should retain the responsibility for setting the collision reporting dollar threshold. The WSP should retain the authority to conduct collision follow up investigations. The WSDOT may not provide public access to accident reports or data.

Testified: Rick Smith, WSDOT (pro); Capt. Glenn Cramer, WSP (pro); Rowland Thompson, Allied Daily Newspapers (con).