

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 1466

As Passed House:
January 18, 2006

Title: An act relating to motorcycles at traffic signals.

Brief Description: Allowing street legal motorcycles to stop and proceed through traffic signals that fail to operate because of the motorcycle's size.

Sponsors: By Representatives Flannigan, Woods, Darneille, Condotta, Kirby, Orcutt, Simpson, Haigh, Nixon, Chase, Strow, Hunt, Blake, Campbell and Kagi.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/28/05, 3/5/05 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/11/05, 92-1.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 1/18/06, 94-2.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Allows motorcycles to turn left after one cycle at a signalized intersection equipped with a vehicle detection device that fails to register the presence of the vehicle.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Wallace, Vice Chair; Woods, Ranking Minority Member; Skinner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Buck, Campbell, Curtis, Dickerson, Ericksen, Hankins, Hudgins, Jarrett, Kilmer, Lovick, Morris, Nixon, Rodne, Sells, Shabro, B. Sullivan, Takko, Upthegrove and Wood.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Simpson.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

All vehicle operators are required to obey traffic control devices, including traffic signals at intersections. Some of these traffic signals are equipped with sensors that determine when a

vehicle has approached the intersection. Once detected by the sensor, the traffic signal will initiate a change in, or extension of, a traffic signal phase (e.g., change a red light to green).

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

After stopping at an intersection controlled by a traffic signal using a vehicle detection device, a motorcyclist may proceed to turn left, after exercising due care, if a full cycle of the traffic signal has passed without the left turn signal operating.

A belief that a traffic signal is equipped with a vehicle detection device, when it is not, is not a defense to a traffic citation for failure to obey a traffic signal. Similarly, a belief that the device is inoperative due to the size of the motorcycle is not a defense when the device is not inoperative.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: None.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2006.

Testimony For: This bill is modeled on current law in Tennessee. Some motorcycles can't trigger a traffic signal in some circumstances. Currently they must either break the law or merge back into traffic. Motorcyclists want to be safe, and this bill would allow them to turn left when necessary and still follow the law. It's safer to let them go through the light than force them to wait. There is no time frame built into the law because of the subjective nature of the measurement if people don't have watches.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Woods; and Leanne Horn, American Bikers Aimed Toward Education of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.