

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5100

As Reported by House Committee On: Transportation

Title: An act relating to processing certain motor vehicle-related violations applicable to rental cars.

Brief Description: Concerning the processing of certain motor vehicle-related violations applicable to rental cars.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs and King.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 3/23/15, 3/31/15 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by Committee)

- Removes an exception prohibiting certain infraction information from being reported to the Department of Licensing for rental cars.
- Clarifies that the person who rented a vehicle when an infraction is issued may be responsible for the infraction.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregerson, Harmsworth, Hayes, Kochmar, McBride, Moeller, Morris, Ortiz-Self, Pike, Riccelli, Sells, Shea, Takko, Tarleton, Wilson, Young and Zeiger.

Staff: Andrew Russell (786-7143).

Background:

Under current law, local jurisdictions and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) may report certain violations to the Department of Licensing (DOL) for purposes

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of withholding vehicle registration renewals applicable to the vehicle at issue. These infractions include unpaid civil penalties related to toll violations and two or more unpaid parking violations, automated traffic safety camera violations, or automated school bus safety camera violations.

However, these reporting provisions do not apply if the vehicle at issue is a rented or leased vehicle. Additionally, rental car businesses are relieved of liability for the violations by forwarding the renter's name and address to the jurisdiction or the WSDOT in a timely manner.

Local courts may refer unpaid monetary obligations attached to parking or camera violations to a collections agency, which include violations involving a rented or leased vehicle. This provision applies to whomever is ultimately liable for the violation—the rental car business or the renter.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The exception for rented or leased vehicles from the DOL reporting is removed, allowing local jurisdictions and the WSDOT to report unpaid parking, camera, or toll violations, for which rental car businesses are liable, to the DOL for purposes of withholding vehicle registration renewals applicable to the vehicle at issue. Additionally, language is added clarifying that if a rental car business forwards the renter's name and address to the jurisdiction, liability for an unpaid infraction transfers to the renter.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill restores current RCW language, relating to the liability for infractions transferring to the renter, that had been stricken in the original bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There have been news stories about uncollected tickets, totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars in Seattle, and maybe millions across the state. Decades ago, this exemption was created because, before computers and the internet, it was hard for rental car companies to track down the renter and forward information to the proper authorities. This bill was drafted with the help of rental car companies, who are interested in helping track down these violators.

(With concerns) Technical issues may need to be addressed in the bill to improve the collection of unpaid tickets. Current language may be interpreted to prevent the collection of infractions relating to express toll lanes and automated traffic safety cameras.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor.

(With concerns) Bill Stauffacher, American Traffic Solutions.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.