

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1159

As of March 13, 2015

Title: An act relating to the safety of new drivers.

Brief Description: Establishing a pilot program requiring certain drivers under eighteen years of age to display a decal on a vehicle being operated by the driver.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Pike, Wylie, Moeller, Zeiger, Kochmar, Harmsworth and Ryu).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/15, 53-44.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/16/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: In Washington a driver who is under 18 years of age may operate a motor vehicle only if the driver holds either an instruction permit or an intermediate license.

The Department of Licensing (DOL) may issue an instruction permit to applicants who are at least 15 years of age and who have passed the knowledge portion of the driver test. The instruction permit is valid for up to one year and allows the holder to operate a motor vehicle on public highways if an instructor or experienced driver occupies the seat beside the driver.

DOL may issue an intermediate license to applicants who are at least 16 years of age, but younger than 18 years of age and meets certain other criteria. An intermediate license authorizes the holder to drive without supervision, but it imposes conditions relating to the time of day the holder may drive and the number of passengers in the vehicle.

New Jersey currently is the only state that requires drivers under age 21 to display a decal on their vehicle license plates identifying them as new drivers.

Summary of Bill: DOL must establish a pilot program in counties with a population of at least 350,000 that border the Columbia River. Currently that describes only Clark County.

The pilot program requires drivers under 18 years of age to affix to any vehicle the driver is driving a decal that reads "NEW DRIVER." This decal must be at least 12 inches wide, 4

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inches high, and be printed in white lettering on a red background. DOL may provide such decal to any person that applies to DOL for an instruction permit, intermediate license, or a driver's license, and the decal may be offered to any other applicant. DOL must charge a fee for the decal equal to the cost of producing and issuing it. Additionally the decal may be offered by a private driver training school and by a public school providing traffic safety education.

A failure to properly display the decal when required is punishable by 20 hours of community service, but is not a traffic infraction.

DOL must provide a report to the Legislature by December 31, 2019, regarding the program's implementation and impact on public safety. The pilot program expires on July 1, 2020.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.