
Transportation Committee

HB 1784

Brief Description: Establishing an exception to the requirement that vehicle license plates be visible at all times for vehicles using certain cargo carrying devices.

Sponsors: Representative Thai.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that the display of a single license plate properly attached to a vehicle that has two license plates properly attached may be temporarily obstructed by a trailer hitch; a wheelchair lift or wheelchair carrier; a trailer being towed by the vehicle; or a bicycle rack, ski rack, or luggage rack.

Hearing Date: 1/18/22

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7140).

Background:

Vehicles required to be registered with the Department of Licensing (DOL) must display license plates or decals assigned by the DOL.

License plates must be:

1. attached conspicuously at the front and rear of each vehicle if two license plates have been issued;
2. kept clean and be able to be plainly seen and read at all times; and
3. attached in a horizontal position at a distance of not more than 4 feet from the ground.

The Washington State Patrol may grant exceptions to the above license plate display

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requirements if the body construction of the vehicle makes compliance impossible.

Summary of Bill:

Provided that the requirements specified below are met, the display of a single license plate properly attached to a vehicle that has two license plates properly attached may be temporarily obstructed by one or more of the following devices by the cargo the device is carrying:

- a trailer hitch;
- a wheelchair lift or wheelchair carrier;
- a trailer being towed by the vehicle, provided the trailer meets any applicable trailer license plate requirements; or
- a bicycle rack, ski rack, or luggage rack.

In order for the above license plate visibility exception to apply, the device must be installed according to manufacturer specifications or generally accepted installation practices, and the device or cargo the device is carrying must not prevent the license plate from being read from one or more accessible viewing angles when the vehicle is parked, except if the device is a trailer that meets trailer license plate requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2022.

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