

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5863

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to the removal of vehicles by a regional transit authority when obstructing the operation of high capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizing public safety.

Brief Description: Concerning the removal of vehicles by a regional transit authority when obstructing the operation of high capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizing public safety.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Saldaña, Lias, Lovick, Nguyen and Wilson, C.).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/24/22, 2/28/22 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended By Committee)

- Allows Regional Transit Authority (RTA) representatives to direct an immediate tow of unauthorized vehicles within an RTA right-of-way.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Bronoske, 2nd Vice Chair; Ramos, 2nd Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Robertson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berry, Chapman, Dent, Donaghy, Duerr, Entenman, Goehner, Griffey, Hackney, Klicker, McCaslin, Orcutt, Paul, Ramel, Riccelli, Slatter, Sutherland, Taylor, Valdez, Walsh and Wicks.

Staff: Michael Hirsch (786-7195).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

Unauthorized vehicles may be impounded by a registered tow truck operator at the direction of a law enforcement officer or other public official with jurisdiction if the vehicle is on public property, or at the direction of the property owner or an agent if it is on private property. A vehicle is deemed unauthorized if it is left unattended in certain public or private locations. A vehicle is immediately considered an unauthorized vehicle and subject to removal if it is:

- determined by a police officer to be an accident or traffic hazard;
 - in a publicly owned or controlled parking facility with proper posted signage;
 - on residential property; or
 - on private, nonresidential property with proper posted signage.
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Summary of Amended Bill:

A vehicle is considered an unauthorized vehicle and is subject to immediate removal by a registered tow truck operator if it is left unattended within a right-of-way used by a regional transit authority (RTA) for high capacity transportation where the vehicle obstructs the operation of a high capacity transportation system vehicle or jeopardizes public safety. An authorized representative of a RTA may request an impound for this type of unauthorized vehicle.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The amended bill limits the definition of an unauthorized vehicle subject to immediate impoundment in instances when a vehicle in a public location constitutes an obstruction to the operation of high capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizes public safety to instances when a vehicle is within, rather than on or within 10 feet of, the right of way used by a regional transit authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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) The bill lets Sound Transit directly contact the tow company, freeing up police capacity and reducing transit delays. Registered tow truck operators want to be called on a

rotational basis. The dynamic envelope of a light rail vehicle is 10 feet. Tow truck operators would not be able to take a vehicle on private property without the permission of the property owner.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Alex Soldano, Sound Transit; and Peter Lukevich, Towing and Recovery Association of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.