
SENATE BILL 5448

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Senators Nobles, Das, Hobbs, Kuderer, Lias, Lovelett, Robinson, Saldaña, and Wilson, C.

Read first time 02/12/21. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to payment plans for certain vehicle fees and
2 taxes; amending RCW 46.16A.110, 46.17.040, 82.44.060, and 46.68.010;
3 and providing an effective date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 46.16A.110 and 2014 c 80 s 3 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) A registered owner or the registered owner's authorized
8 representative must apply for a renewal vehicle registration to the
9 department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by
10 the director on a form approved by the director. The application for
11 a renewal vehicle registration must be accompanied by a draft, money
12 order, certified bank check, or cash for all fees and taxes required
13 by law for the application for a renewal vehicle registration, except
14 as allowed under subsection (6) of this section.

15 (2)(a) When a vehicle changes ownership, the person taking
16 ownership or his or her authorized representative must apply for a
17 renewal vehicle registration as provided in subsection (1) of this
18 section and, except as provided in (b) of this subsection, pay all
19 the taxes and fees that are due at the time of registration renewal.
20 For the purposes of this section, when a vehicle is sold to a vehicle

1 dealer for resale, the application for a renewal registration need
2 not be made until the vehicle is sold by the vehicle dealer.

3 (b) The person taking ownership or his or her authorized
4 representative must be given credit for the portion of a motor
5 vehicle excise tax, including the motor vehicle excise tax collected
6 under RCW 81.104.160, that reflects the remaining period for which
7 the tax was initially paid by the previous owner.

8 (3) An application and the fees and taxes for a renewal vehicle
9 registration must be handled in the same manner as an original
10 vehicle registration application. The registration does not need to
11 show the name of the lienholder when the application for renewal
12 vehicle registration becomes the renewal registration upon
13 validation.

14 (4) A person expecting to be out of state during the normal
15 renewal period of a vehicle registration may renew a vehicle
16 registration and have license plates or tabs preissued by applying
17 for a renewal as described in subsection (1) of this section. A
18 vehicle registration may be renewed for the subsequent registration
19 year up to eighteen months before the current expiration date and
20 must be displayed from the date of issue or from the day of the
21 expiration of the current registration year, whichever date is later.

22 (5) An application for a renewal vehicle registration is not
23 required for those vehicles owned, rented, or leased by:

24 (a) The state of Washington, or by any county, city, town, school
25 district, or other political subdivision of the state of Washington;
26 or

27 (b) A governing body of an Indian tribe located within this state
28 and recognized as a governmental entity by the United States
29 department of the interior.

30 (6) If the sum of all fees and taxes required by law for the
31 application for a renewal vehicle registration exceeds \$150, the
32 registered owner or the registered owner's authorized representative
33 may enter into a quarterly payment plan with the department for the
34 amount of fees and taxes due. The quarterly payments must each be of
35 an equal amount, except when the entire remaining amount of the fees
36 and taxes due is paid. The first quarterly payment must be made with
37 the application for a renewal vehicle registration. The department
38 shall charge a one-time fee of four percent of each vehicle
39 registration transaction when a quarterly payment plan is entered
40 into and the fee may be divided between the quarterly payments. This

1 fee must be deposited in the motor vehicle fund created in RCW
2 46.68.070. Revenue from this new fee may only be used for additional
3 direct costs to allow quarterly payment plans. The department, in
4 collaboration with counties and subagents, shall develop and
5 periodically update a cost allocation method to share the fee revenue
6 based on the proportional additional costs borne by each entity in
7 allowing quarterly payment plans. The cost allocation method must be
8 included in the agency biennial budget submittal each biennium.
9 Payments made under this subsection after the application for a
10 renewal vehicle registration are not subject to additional fees under
11 RCW 46.17.040(1)(b), 46.17.005, 46.17.025, or 46.17.015.

12 **Sec. 2.** RCW 46.17.040 and 2019 c 417 s 2 are each amended to
13 read as follows:

14 (1) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent
15 appointed by the director shall collect a service fee of:

16 (a) Fifteen dollars for changes in a certificate of title,
17 changes in ownership for nontitled vehicles, or for verification of
18 record and preparation of an affidavit of lost title other than at
19 the time of the certificate of title application or transfer, in
20 addition to any other fees or taxes due at the time of application;
21 and

22 (b) Eight dollars for a registration renewal, issuing a transit
23 permit, or any other service under this section, in addition to any
24 other fees or taxes due at the time of application, except payments
25 made after the initial payment made with the application for a
26 renewal vehicle registration under RCW 46.16A.110(6).

27 (2) Service fees collected under this section by the department
28 or county auditor or other agent appointed by the director must be
29 credited to the capital vessel replacement account under RCW
30 47.60.322.

31 **Sec. 3.** RCW 82.44.060 and 2010 c 161 s 911 are each amended to
32 read as follows:

33 (1) ~~((Any))~~ Except as allowed under RCW 46.16A.110(6), any
34 locally imposed excise tax:

35 (a) Is due at the time of registration of a vehicle;

36 (b) Must be paid in full before any registration certificate or
37 license tab may be issued;

1 (c) Is in addition to any other vehicle license fees required by
2 law;

3 (d) Must be collected by the department, county auditor or other
4 agent, or subagent appointed by the director of licensing before
5 issuing the registration certificate;

6 (e) Must be collected for each registration year; and

7 (f) Must be levied for one full registration year beginning on
8 the date of the calendar year designated by the department and ending
9 on the same date of the next succeeding calendar year. For vehicles
10 registered under chapter 46.87 RCW, proportional registration, and
11 for vehicle dealer plates issued under chapter 46.70 RCW, the
12 registration year is the period provided in those chapters. However,
13 the tax shall in no case be less than two dollars except for
14 proportionally registered vehicles.

15 (2) A vehicle is deemed registered for the first time in this
16 state when the vehicle was not previously registered by this state
17 for the registration year immediately preceding the registration year
18 in which the application for registration is made or when the vehicle
19 has been registered in another jurisdiction subsequent to any prior
20 registration in this state.

21 (3) An additional tax may not be imposed under this chapter on
22 any vehicle when the certificate of title is being transferred if the
23 tax has already been paid for the registration year or fraction of a
24 registration year in which transfer of ownership occurs. However, the
25 department may continue to collect any remaining payments due as
26 required by a payment plan entered into pursuant to RCW
27 46.16A.110(6).

28 **Sec. 4.** RCW 46.68.010 and 2010 c 161 s 801 are each amended to
29 read as follows:

30 (1) A person who has paid all or part of a vehicle license fee
31 under this title is entitled to a refund if the amount was paid in
32 error or if the vehicle:

33 (a) Was destroyed before the new registration period began;

34 (b) Was permanently removed from Washington state before the new
35 registration period began;

36 (c) Registration was purchased after the owner sold the vehicle;

37 (d) Was registered in another jurisdiction after the Washington
38 state registration had been purchased. Any full months of Washington

1 vehicle license fees remaining after application for out-of-state
2 registration was made are refundable; or

3 (e) Registration was purchased before the vehicle was sold and
4 before the new registration period began. The person who paid the
5 fees must return the unused, never-affixed license tabs to the
6 department before the new registration period begins.

7 (2) The department shall refund overpayments of vehicle license
8 fees and motor vehicle excise taxes under Title 82 RCW that are ten
9 dollars or more. A request for a refund is not required.

10 (3) The department shall certify refunds to the state treasurer
11 as correct and being claimed in the time required by law. The state
12 treasurer shall mail or deliver the amount of each refund to the
13 person who is entitled to the refund. The department shall not
14 authorize refunds of fees paid in error unless the request is made
15 within three years after the fees were paid.

16 (4) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent
17 appointed by the director shall not renew a vehicle registration if
18 any motor vehicle excise tax previously due has not been paid in full
19 prior to the current vehicle registration expiration.

20 (5) If due to error the department, county auditor or other
21 agent, or subagent appointed by the director has failed to collect
22 the full amount of the vehicle license fee and excise tax due and the
23 underpayment is in the amount of ten dollars or more, the department
24 shall charge and collect the additional amount to constitute full
25 payment of the tax and fees.

26 ~~((+5))~~ (6) Any person who makes a false statement under which he
27 or she obtains a refund that he or she is not entitled to under this
28 section is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act takes effect October 1, 2022.

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