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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5317**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Nobles, J. Wilson, Frame, Liias, Lovick, Saldaña, Salomon, Shewmake, Wellman, and C. Wilson)

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; amending RCW 46.55.010; and reenacting RCW 46.55.080.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 46.55.010 and 2022 c 186 s 708 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions set forth in this section apply throughout this chapter:

(1) "Abandoned vehicle" means a vehicle that a registered tow truck operator has impounded and held in the operator's possession for 120 consecutive hours.

(2) "Immobilize" means the use of a locking wheel boot that, when attached to the wheel of a vehicle, prevents the vehicle from moving without damage to the tire to which the locking wheel boot is attached.

(3) "Abandoned vehicle report" means the document prescribed by the state that the towing operator forwards to the department after a vehicle has become abandoned.

(4) "Impound" means to take and hold a vehicle in legal custody. There are two types of impounds—public and private.

(a) "Public impound" means that the vehicle has been impounded at the direction of a law enforcement officer or by a public official having jurisdiction over the public property upon which the vehicle was located.

(b) "Private impound" means that the vehicle has been impounded at the direction of a person having control or possession of the private property upon which the vehicle was located.

(5) "Junk vehicle" means a vehicle certified under RCW 46.55.230 as meeting at least three of the following requirements:

(a) Is three years old or older;

(b) Is extensively damaged, such damage including but not limited to any of the following: A broken window or windshield, or missing wheels, tires, motor, or transmission;

(c) Is apparently inoperable;

(d) Has an approximate fair market value equal only to the approximate value of the scrap in it.

(6) "Master log" means the document or an electronic facsimile prescribed by the department and the Washington state patrol in which an operator records transactions involving impounded vehicles.

(7) "Registered tow truck operator" or "operator" means any person who engages in the impounding, transporting, or storage of unauthorized vehicles or the disposal of abandoned vehicles.

(8) "Residential property" means property that has no more than four living units located on it.

(9) "Suspended license impound" means an impound ordered under RCW 46.55.113 because the operator was arrested for a violation of RCW 46.20.342 or 46.20.345.

(10) "Tow truck" means a motor vehicle that is equipped for and used in the business of towing vehicles with equipment as approved by the state patrol.

(11) "Tow truck number" means the number issued by the department to tow trucks used by a registered tow truck operator in the state of Washington.

(12) "Tow truck permit" means the permit issued annually by the department that has the classification of service the tow truck may provide stamped upon it.

(13) "Tow truck service" means the transporting upon the public streets and highways of this state of vehicles, together with personal effects and cargo, by a tow truck of a registered operator.

(14) "Unauthorized vehicle" means a vehicle that is subject to impoundment after being left unattended in one of the following public or private locations for the indicated period of time:

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| Subject to removal after: | |
| (a) | Public locations: |
| (i) | Constituting an accident or a traffic hazard as  defined in RCW 46.55.113 Immediately |
| (ii) | On a highway and tagged as described in RCW  46.55.085 24 hours |
| (iii) | In a publicly owned or controlled parking  facility, properly posted under RCW  46.55.070 Immediately |
| (iv) | ((~~During the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium, within the~~)) On or within 10 feet on either side of a right-of-way used by a regional transit authority for high capacity transportation where the vehicle constitutes an obstruction to the operation of high capacity transportation vehicles or  jeopardizes public safety Immediately |
| (b) | Private locations: |
| (i) | On residential property Immediately |
| (ii) | On private, nonresidential property,  properly posted under RCW  46.55.070 Immediately |
| (iii) | On private, nonresidential property,  not posted 24 hours |

**Sec.**  RCW 46.55.080 and 2022 c 186 s 709 are each reenacted to read as follows:

(1) If a vehicle is in violation of the time restrictions of RCW 46.55.010(14), it may be impounded by a registered tow truck operator at the direction of a law enforcement officer, authorized regional transit authority representative under the conditions described in RCW 46.55.010(14)(a)(iv), 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 law enforcement officer may also direct the impoundment of a vehicle pursuant to a writ or court order.

(2) The person requesting a private impound or a law enforcement officer, authorized regional transit authority representative, or public official requesting a public impound shall provide a signed authorization for the impound at the time and place of the impound to the registered tow truck operator before the operator may proceed with the impound. A registered tow truck operator, employee, or his or her agent may not serve as an agent of a property owner for the purposes of signing an impound authorization or, independent of the property owner, identify a vehicle for impound.

(3) In the case of a private impound, the impound authorization shall include the following statement: "A person authorizing this impound, if the impound is found in violation of chapter 46.55 RCW, may be held liable for the costs incurred by the vehicle owner."

(4) A registered tow truck operator shall record and keep in the operator's files the date and time that a vehicle is put in the operator's custody and released. The operator shall make an entry into a master log regarding transactions relating to impounded vehicles. The operator shall make this master log available, upon request, to representatives of the department or the state patrol.

(5) A person who engages in or offers to engage in the activities of a registered tow truck operator may not be associated in any way with a person or business whose main activity is authorizing the impounding of vehicles.

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