

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESB 5590

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Transportation

**Title:** An act relating to creating Mount St. Helens special license plates.

**Brief Description:** Creating Mount St. Helens special license plates.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wilson, L., Hunt, Braun, Dozier, Hawkins, Kuderer, Lovick, Wellman and Wilson, J..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Transportation: 2/14/24, 2/21/24 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill**

- Creates the Mount St. Helens special license plate.
- Establishes original and renewal fees for the special license plate.
- Directs proceeds from the special license plate to promote education, stewardship, and science at Mount St. Helens through the Mount St. Helens Institute.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Timmons, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Hutchins, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Low, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Robertson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berry, Bronoske, Chapman, Cortes, Dent, Doglio, Duerr, Entenman, Goehner, Griffey, Hackney, Klicker, Mena, Nance, Orcutt, Ramel, Ramos, Schmidt and Volz.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Walsh.

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*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.*

**Staff:** Michael Hirsch (786-7195).

**Background:**

The Department of Licensing (DOL) issues special vehicle license plates that may be used in lieu of standard plates. An organization seeking to sponsor a special license plate must be a nonprofit organization, a professional sports franchise working in conjunction with a nonprofit organization, or a government agency. The sponsoring organization may choose one of two ways of creating a special license plate.

*Application Process and Legislation.*

In this method, a sponsoring organization submits an application to the DOL prior to pursuing legislation. The application packet must include the design of the special license plate, proof of 3,500 signatures in support of the special license plate, and the start-up fee of \$6,300. After the DOL approves the application, the sponsoring organization must pursue legislation to create the special license plate.

*Legislation Without the Department of Licensing's Review.*

In this method, a sponsoring organization pursues legislation without applying to the DOL first. Once the bill is enacted, the sponsoring organization must provide the design of the special license plate and the start-up fee of \$6,300 to the DOL within 30 days.

In both methods, if the sponsoring organization can prove that they are unable to provide the start-up fee up front, then revenues from the sale of the special license plate will be used to pay this fee. On an annual basis, the sponsoring organization must submit a financial report to the DOL detailing actual revenues from the sale of the special license plate. The DOL compiles these reports and presents them to the transportation committees of the Legislature.

The DOL collects special license plate fees and, for administrative expenses, deducts an amount not to exceed \$12 for new plate issuance and \$2 for renewal. After these expenses are paid, the State Treasurer (Treasurer) deposits the proceeds into the Motor Vehicle Account until the DOL determines that the start-up fee for a special license plate is paid. Once the start-up fee is paid, the Treasurer credits the remaining special license plate fee amounts into an account specified for the sponsoring organization.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The Mount St. Helens special license plate is created. In addition to all fees and taxes required to be paid upon application for a vehicle registration, a fee of \$40 is charged for the original issuance of a Mount St. Helens special license plate, and a \$30 fee is charged for the renewal of the plate. Revenue from the sale of the special license plates will provide funds to promote education, stewardship, and science at Mount St. Helens through the

Mount St. Helens Institute.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on October 1, 2024.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) People have committed to buying this plate. It takes resources for small nonprofits to gather signatures for a special plate. The Mount St. Helens Institute wants the special license plate in advance of the economic development opportunity of the 50th anniversary of the eruption. The proceeds from the sale of the plate will go to support conservation efforts, the outdoor school programs to disadvantaged youth, and collaboration with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe to offer culturally relevant programming. Mount St. Helens is a nationally registered traditional cultural place of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Coldwater Ridge Science and Learning Center is critical with the road currently out of service to Johnston Ridge Observatory. Mount St. Helens is an iconic landmark in this state that 750,000 people visit each year.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Lynda Wilson, prime sponsor; Alyssa Hoyt, Mount St. Helens Institute; and William Iyall.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.