

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5127

As of January 20, 2025

Title: An act relating to creating additional requirements for collector vehicle and horseless carriage license plates to improve compliance and public safety.

Brief Description: Creating additional requirements for collector vehicle and horseless carriage license plates to improve compliance and public safety.

Sponsors: Senators Lovick, Fortunato, Lias and Nobles; by request of Department of Licensing.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/20/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires collector vehicle owners to maintain a valid collector vehicle insurance policy.
- Requires collector vehicle owners have a second vehicle registered for daily use.
- Modifies the age requirement for horseless carriages.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: A registered owner may apply for a collector vehicle plate for a motor vehicle at least 30 years old. The owner may receive a collector plate assigned by the Department of Licensing (DOL), or the owner can provide an actual Washington state-issued license plate designated for general use in the year the vehicle was manufactured. In addition to any other fees or taxes associated with transaction, the original collector vehicle registration is \$35, and the plates:

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- are valid for the life of the vehicle;
- are not required to be renewed;
- may be transferred from one vehicle to another vehicle if the plate was provided by the owner; and
- must be displayed on the rear of the motor vehicle.

These vehicles may only be used for participation in club activities, exhibitions, tours, parades, and occasional driving.

A registered owner may apply for a horseless carriage license plate if the vehicle is more than 40 years old, is capable of operating on the highway, and is owned and operated as a collector vehicle. In addition to any other fees or taxes associated with transaction, the original horseless carriage registration is \$35, and the plates:

- are valid for the life of the vehicle;
- are not required to be renewed;
- may not be transferred from one vehicle to another vehicle; and
- must be displayed on the rear of the motor vehicle.

The mandatory insurance law requires most drivers to have motor vehicle liability insurance or another way to assume financial responsibility for damages. The insurance policy must have minimum dollar coverage per accident of:

- \$25,000 of bodily injury or death of one person;
- \$50,000 of bodily injury or death of any two or more people; and
- \$10,000 of injury to or destruction of property of others.

Collector vehicles and horseless carriages are exempt from the mandatory insurance law financial responsibility requirements.

Summary of Bill: The exemption of collector vehicles and horseless carriages from the mandatory insurance law financial responsibility requirements is repealed. After January 15, 2026, applicants for a collector vehicle plate must provide proof of having a collector vehicle insurance policy with the minimum liability coverage limits specified in law. A person driving a collector vehicle must maintain collector vehicle insurance meeting the requirements of the mandatory insurance law. DOL must adopt rules defining collector vehicle insurance meeting these requirements.

After January 15, 2026, applicants for a collector vehicle plate must provide proof of ownership and current registration of a second vehicle to be used for daily driving, commuting, or work purposes. DOL is authorized to make exceptions to this requirement, if the owner can demonstrate they have an alternative way of addressing regular transportation needs.

A person who does not meet the collector vehicle requirements must surrender their plate. A person whose collector vehicle registration has been canceled may operate the vehicle

once they have paid the applicable fees and met other vehicle registration requirements.

The age requirements to qualify for horseless carriage license plates is changed from motor vehicles at least 40 years old to motor vehicles manufactured or built before January 1, 1916.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 15, 2026.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is evidence that the collector vehicle plate system has become subject to abuse with the owners of the vehicles inappropriately using them for daily use. The legislation requiring owners to have a second vehicle registration, with certain allowed exceptions, will put the brakes on this corruption and misuse. This bill also addresses the fact that many owners of collector vehicle are uninsured at higher rates and also involved accidents. This is a modest approach to a problem that has existed for some time and improves the integrity of the collector vehicle program. This legislation allows reasonable exceptions to these new requirements.

CON: The legislation is unfair because proof of ownership of a second vehicle and proof of insurance is not required to register any other types of vehicle. This treats collector vehicle owners unfairly. There will be logistical issues in the department attempting to enforce these new requirements. While there is misuse, you can't legislate compliance.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator John Lovick, Prime Sponsor; Alejandro Sanchez, Department of Licensing.

CON: Les Holm.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.