

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5556

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As of February 6, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to modernizing the adopt-a-highway program to improve its ability to meet its original purpose within existing fiscal limitations.

**Brief Description:** Modernizing the adopt-a-highway program to improve its ability to meet its original purpose within existing fiscal limitations.

**Sponsors:** Senators Ramos, Lovick, Valdez, Lovelett, Shewmake, Chapman, Trudeau, Nobles and Wilson, C..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/06/25.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Makes the Washington State Department of Transportation's Adopt-a-Highway Program and its authorization to recognize Adopt-a-Highway Program participants with signs contingent on availability of appropriations.
- Requires annual reporting to the Legislature and the Office of Financial Management with a list of Adopt-a-Highway Program applicants and participants and their compliance with Adopt-a-Highway Program obligations.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Daniel Masterson (786-7454)

**Background:** The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) maintains a statewide Adopt-a-Highway Program in which volunteers, including businesses, are able to adopt sections of state highways, rest areas, park and ride lots, intermodal facilities, and

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other WSDOT facilities with the stated program goal of contributing to a cleaner environment, enhanced roadsides, and protection of wildlife habitats. Program participant responsibilities include litter control, and may also include responsibility for planting and maintaining vegetation, controlling weeds, graffiti removal, and other roadside improvement or cleanup activities.

WSDOT is required to maintain a standardized application form, registration form, and contractual agreement for the Adopt-a-Highway Program. WSDOT is also required to erect and maintain signs with Adopt-a-Highway Program participant names on each end of a section of highway that has been adopted.

WSDOT must seek partnerships that facilitate Adopt-a-Highway Program goals, and may solicit funding for the Adopt-a-Highway Program that permits private entities to finance the work to be done.

An organization with a name that endorses or opposes a particular candidate for public office; advocates a position on a specific political issue, initiative, referendum, or piece of legislation; or includes a reference to a political party may not participate in the Adopt-a-Highway Program.

WSDOT may install Adopt-a-Highway signs, subject to certain restrictions. Signs are required to be designed by the WSDOT, and may only include the words "Adopt-a-Highway litter control facility" or "Adopt-a-Highway litter control next XX miles" and the name of the Adopt-a-Highway Program sponsor. The sponsor's name may not be displayed more predominantly than the rest of sign message. Trademarks or business logos may be displayed.

The WSDOT is prohibited from accepting Adopt-a-Highway proposals that would result in the termination of classified employees or employee positions.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

**Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute):** WSDOT's authorization to establish the Adopt-a-Highway Program, and the requirement to recognize Adopt-a-Highway Program participants with signs, are conditioned on the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose in an Omnibus Transportation Appropriations Act, effective July 1, 2026.

WSDOT shall submit annually by December 1st to the Transportation Committees of the Legislature and the Office of Financial Management a list in excel or similar electronic format that includes:

- each participating organization and program applicant;
- whether the participant or applicant partners with a paid contractor or acts solely as a volunteer;
- the location of each highway section adopted;

- whether the participant has met the obligations of its contractual agreement during the last year; and
- any contextual information WSDOT deems relevant.

The first report due in 2025 must include the participant's record of compliance with the obligations of its contractual agreement since becoming an Adopt-a-Highway Program participant, not just during the last year.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.