

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1995

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, MARCH 28, 1991

Brief Description: Exempting converter gear and tow dollies from licensing.

SPONSORS: Representatives R. Fisher, Jones, Wood, R. Meyers, Horn, Wilson, Mielke and Miller.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chairman; Nelson, Vice Chairman; von Reichbauer, Vice Chairman; Barr, Conner, Erwin, Hansen, Madsen, McMullen, Oke, Sellar, Skratek, Snyder, Thorsness, and Vognild.

Staff: Mary McLaughlin (786-7309)

Hearing Dates: March 28, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Converter gear is used to (1) convert a semitrailer to a full trailer, (2) convert a two-axle truck to a three or more axle truck, or (3) increase the number of axles on a vehicle. A tow dolly is used to tow a motor vehicle behind another motor vehicle, i.e., a motor home towing a passenger car.

Most states do not require converter gear and tow dollies to be licensed as the structure being converted, a truck, tractor or trailer, bears the vehicle license. Annual licensing is optional in Washington State. If the equipment is being used to convert a unit, a license is not required. However, if the equipment is being pulled "empty" behind a vehicle, it is considered to be a "trailer" and annual registration, \$36 plus motor vehicle excise tax (MVET), or a trip permit, \$10 for three days, is required. If the converter gear is frequently pulled as a trailer, the carrier usually opts for annual registration.

The state of California is the only state under the International Registration Plan (IRP) that requires annual licensing of converter gear. Under the IRP, the license fee for converter gear is prorated for Washington-based carriers operating in California. Other IRP-member states do not collect California's converter gear license fees on behalf of their base-state carriers. The carriers are directly responsible for licensing their converter gear in California.

SUMMARY:

Converter gear and tow bars are exempt from Washington's vehicle registration and licensing requirements. Converter gears are no longer considered apportioned vehicles for the purposes of prorate.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR: None

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: No one