

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1722

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As Reported By House Committee On:  
Transportation

**Title:** An act relating to regulating the use of optical strobe light devices controlling traffic control lights.

**Brief Description:** Regulating the use of optical strobe light devices controlling traffic lights.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Zellinsky, R. Fisher, Wood, Schmidt, Sheldon, Orr and Johanson.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Transportation, February 16, 1993, DPS.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives R. Fisher, Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Jones, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Brough; Brumsickle; Cothorn; Eide; Forner; Fuhrman; Hansen; Heavey; Horn; Johanson; J. Kohl; R. Meyers; Miller; H. Myers; Orr; Patterson; Quall; Sheldon; Shin; Wood; and Zellinsky.

**Staff:** Brian McMorrow (786-7304).

**Background:** Optical strobe lights are devices used by emergency vehicles that emit an optical signal at a specific frequency to a traffic control signal, enabling an emergency vehicle to assume the right of way at intersections.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** Department of Transportation maintenance vehicles and city and county maintenance vehicles would be permitted to use optical strobe light devices to perform maintenance tests on traffic control lights.

Public transit agencies would be permitted to use optical strobe light devices in public transit vehicles to accelerate the cycle of the traffic control light. Public transit vehicles operating an optical strobe light must yield to emergency vehicles when simultaneously approaching the same traffic signal. "Public transit vehicles" refer to

vehicles used for mass transportation that are owned by a governmental entity and can carry 25 or more persons.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** City and county maintenance vehicles are permitted to use optical strobe light devices. The original bill did not mention cities and counties.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The department, cities and counties need this legislation so that they will not be cited by local law enforcement officers while working on traffic control signals. Transit operators in medium-sized cities will use these devices to make their systems' operations are more efficient.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Richard Hayes, Kitsap Transit and Washington State Transit Association; Craig Olson, Association of Washington Cities (with amendment); Rick Jensen, Washington State Patrol; and Jim Shanafelt, Department of Transportation.