

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5993**

**AS OF JANUARY 17, 1994**

**Brief Description:** Prohibiting speeding in construction zones.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Winsley, Oke and Erwin

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

**Staff:** Jeff Doyle (786-7322)

**Hearing Dates:** January 18, 1994

**BACKGROUND:**

In 1992 there were approximately 900 accidents reported by the Washington State Patrol that occurred within highway work zones in District 1. Recently, an employee of the Department of Transportation was struck and killed while working on a highway construction project.

A Work Zone Safety Task Force was convened during the interim to study the problem. Drivers speeding through work zones were found to create a substantial risk of injury or death to flaggers and other construction crew within highway work zones.

Under current law, no distinction is made between persons who speed near work zones and persons speeding on other areas of the highway. Speeding is a violation of RCW 46.61.400, and a traffic infraction ranging anywhere from \$25 to \$165 may be imposed, depending on the speed of the vehicle.

In addition to the monetary penalty, the State Patrol may issue a ticket for reckless driving, which is a gross misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment of not more than one year and by a fine of no more than \$5,000. Any person convicted of reckless driving has his or her license suspended for at least 30 days. However, to convict a driver of reckless driving, the state must prove that the person was driving with willful or wanton disregard for the safety of others.

**SUMMARY:**

The Department of Transportation may adjust speed limits in areas where highway construction and maintenance work is in progress. Any person exceeding the posted speed limit shall be fined \$500.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested