

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2525

As Reported By House Committee On:
Transportation Policy & Budget

Title: An act relating to studded tires.

Brief Description: Phasing in lightweight tire studs.

Sponsors: Representatives Backlund, Fisher, K. Schmidt, Dunshee, B. Thomas, Mielke, Wood and Mitchell; by request of Department of Transportation.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation Policy & Budget: 1/20/98, 1/26/98 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY & BUDGET

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Hankins, Vice Chairman; Mielke, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Cooper, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Buck; Cairnes; Constantine; DeBolt; Gardner; Hatfield; Johnson; McCune; Murray; O'Brien; Ogden; Radcliff; Robertson; Romero; Scott; Skinner; Sterk and Wood.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Chandler and Zellinsky.

Staff: Jeff Doyle (786-7322).

Background: The state of Washington permits the use of studded tires from November 1 to April 1 of each year. A 1991 study found that 24 states allow the use of studded tires during specified time periods, while Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin prohibit studded tires.

Studies indicate that 14 percent to 35 percent of vehicles in Washington use typical studded tires. Typical studs have a steel body and are heavier than the newer generation studs currently mandated in most of northern Europe. As the tire wears, the stud protrusion increases, exacerbating road wear. Furthermore, the rate of road wear increases when the pavement is wet.

Recent study data indicate that over the course of its 30,000 mile useful life, a studded tire will remove between one-half and three-quarter tons of asphalt concrete mix. The cost of material replacement alone would range from \$8 to \$15 per tire, depending on material costs. The state of Alaska has estimated that repairing ruts caused by studded tires requires that pavement adjacent to the rutted lane also be extracted, driving the repair costs up to \$40 to \$50 per studded tire.

The newest generation of lightweight studs are estimated to reduce road wear by 15 percent, without any decrease in performance.

The state of Oregon recently passed a law mandating the use of lightweight tire studs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Lightweight studs are the only type of stud approved for use in snow tires beginning July 1, 2004.

Wholesalers must sell only lightweight studs to tire dealers in Washington, beginning January 1, 1999. An exception is granted for wholesalers who currently have the heavier studs in inventory. Tire dealers may continue to sell the heavier metal studs until July 1, 2000.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Washington State Patrol does not have authority to modify the standards for studded tires. Wholesalers are allowed to deplete their existing inventory before the lightweight stud requirement applies to them.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except section 4, which takes effect July 1, 2004.

Testimony For: These lighter-weight studs will reduce road damage by 10 to 15 percent. These are the same standards that the state of Oregon has adopted. Idaho is considering similar legislation.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Richard Nordness, Northwest Tire Dealers Association; and Dave Bowers, Department of Transportation.