

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5155

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As Passed Senate, March 10, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to vehicle width.

**Brief Description:** Adjusting vehicle width limits.

**Sponsors:** Senators Horn, Heavey and Prince.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 1/29/97, 2/18/97 [DP].  
Passed Senate, 3/10/97, 48-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prince, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Goings, Haugen, Heavey, Horn, Jacobsen, Morton, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, Rasmussen and Sellar.

**Staff:** Mary McLaughlin (786-7309)

**Background:** One type of self-tarping mechanism currently being manufactured is a retractable, three-sided tarp (made of tarpaulin, a waterproof canvas) that fits over a flatbed trailer and encloses the cargo. About 20-30 trailers currently are using this system in Washington State. The advantage of the tarpaulins is the lightweight design and the ability to load and unload from three sides versus being restricted to the back door of the trailer.

These tarping devices require an additional three inches on each side of the vehicle (over the legal width limit of 8 « feet). Federal law allows up to three inches for safety devices and other appurtenances. Because state law only allows an overhang of two inches for safety appliances (clearance lights, rub rails, flexible fender extensions) and appurtenances (door handles, door hinges, turning sign brackets), a trucker using a self tarping mechanism must obtain a special overwidth permit from the Department of Transportation (DOT). Special overwidth permit fees are \$10/trip, \$20 for 30 days, and \$100/year.

**Summary of Bill:** State law is modified to conform with federal law by extending the amount of overhang for truck safety appliances and appurtenances to three inches on each side of the vehicle. This change eliminates the need for truckers to obtain DOT special overwidth permits when their vehicles are equipped with self-tarping devices.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Making vehicle safety device extensions the same as the federal requirement promotes uniformity among the states. Self-tarping mechanisms promote safety by securing the load.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Senator Horn, prime sponsor; Larry Pursley, WA Trucking Assn.; John Balcom, WSDOT; Rick Jensen, WA Refuse and Recycling Assn.