

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2343

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 22, 2000

Title: An act relating to the redemption of vehicles through credit cards and checks drawn on financial institutions.

Brief Description: Allowing the redemption of vehicles by payments from financial institutions.

Sponsors: House Committee on Financial Institutions & Insurance (originally sponsored by Representatives Hatfield, Benson and Esser).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/22/2000 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Benton, Costa, Eide, Horn, Jacobsen, Morton, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, Sheahan and Swecker.

Staff: Lynn Hale (786-7346)

Background: Law enforcement officers are authorized to impound a vehicle in a variety of circumstances, such as when the officer arrests the driver, the person operating the vehicle does not have a valid driver's license, or when the person operating the vehicle is driving with a suspended or revoked license. A vehicle impounded by a law enforcement officer may be redeemed only by the owner of the vehicle or a person who has the permission of the owner and upon payment of all costs associated with the impound using commercially reasonable tender.

Commercially reasonable tender includes cash, major bank credit cards, and personal checks drawn on in-state banks if accompanied by two pieces of valid identification.

Summary of Amended Bill: Commercially reasonable tender is modified to include major bank credit cards issued by financial institutions and checks drawn on Washington branches of financial institutions. A towing firm does not have to accept a check the towing firm cannot verify to be good.

A reference to suspended license impounds is added to make language consistent with remaining statutes concerning impounded vehicles.

When tow truck operators provide correct and complete information to the department, storage charges may continue to accrue.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amended bill adds a reference to suspended license impounds to make language consistent with remaining statutes concerning impounded vehicles, and provides that when tow truck operators provide correct and complete information to the department, storage charges may continue to accrue.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: It will enable major credit cards and checks issued by credit unions to be used to reclaim impounded vehicles. It closes a loophole in current law if incorrect or incomplete information is provided to the department. It allows the tow truck operators to provide correct and accurate information to the department and begin collecting storage costs again.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mark Minickiello, Washington Credit Union League; Stu Halsan, Washington Tow Truck Association.