

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5380

---

As Passed Senate, March 12, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to requiring stops at intersections with nonfunctioning signal lights.

**Brief Description:** Requiring stops at intersections with nonfunctioning signal lights.

**Sponsors:** Senators Goings, Benton, Haugen and Costa; by request of Department of Transportation and Washington State Patrol.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/3/99, 2/16/99 [DP].  
Passed Senate, 3/12/99, 44-0.

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Benton, Costa, Eide, Heavey, Horn, Jacobsen, Morton, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, Sellar, T. Sheldon and Shin.

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

**Background:** The basic right-of-way rule for a vehicle approaching an intersection is that when two vehicles from different roads approach an unmarked intersection at the same time, the vehicle on the left yields to the vehicle on the right. The right-of-way rule for a vehicle turning left is that the vehicle intending to turn left must yield to the vehicle approaching from the opposite direction. There appears to be some confusion as to who has the right of way when proceeding through an intersection with a traffic control signal that is not functioning.

**Summary of Bill:** An intersection with a nonfunctioning signal light is considered an all-way stop. Except when directed to proceed by a flagger, police officer or firefighter, a driver of a vehicle approaching an intersection whose traffic signal is not functioning must stop and yield the right of way in compliance with the basic right-of-way rule for (1) a vehicle approaching an intersection, and (2) a vehicle turning left at an intersection. The red/yellow/green traffic signal is specified to preclude having to stop at an intersection with a control beacon or other traffic control device.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Clarifying the procedures to be followed when approaching an intersection with a nonfunctioning light will help reduce the number of accidents occurring at these intersections. An education program will make the public aware of the new law.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Senator Goings, prime sponsor; Toby Rickman, Dept. of Transportation; Capt. Eric Robertson, WSP.