

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2753

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to department of licensing agents or subagents.

Brief Description: Modifying department of licensing agent or subagent provisions.

Sponsors: Representatives Hatfield, Hankins, Schindler, Cooper, Rockefeller and Edwards.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/4/02, 2/7/02 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Subagents and county auditors are authorized to process surrendered vehicle titles and abandoned vehicle reports for vehicles that have either been destroyed or abandoned.
- Fees are established for the Department of Licensing, county auditors, and subagents to process the surrendered titles and abandoned vehicle reports.
- Subagents are authorized to handle mail-in registration renewals, including internet registration renewals, and to collect the associated fee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Fisher, Chair; Cooper, Vice Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Mitchell, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Armstrong, Edwards, Haigh, Hankins, Hatfield, Holmquist, Jackley, Jarrett, Mielke, Morell, Murray, Ogden, Reardon, Rockefeller, Romero, Schindler, Simpson, Skinner, Sullivan, Wood and Woods.

Staff: Reema Griffith (786-7301).

Background:

Under current law, when a vehicle is destroyed beyond repair or declared a total loss, the

Department of Licensing (DOL) must be notified by the owner or the insurance company, and the title and registration must be surrendered within 15 days of the accident. Upon receiving this notification, the DOL must process the surrendered title and update its vehicle records to reflect this information within three working days of receipt.

If wreckers take possession of a destroyed vehicle, they must submit the vehicle information in a written report and attach certificate of ownership documentation within 30 days of acquiring the vehicle. The DOL will then process this information and update its vehicle records to reflect the change in title. This takes the department approximately one to five working days.

In dealing with abandoned vehicles, tow truck operators are required to submit an abandoned vehicle report to the DOL by mail or fax. Once the department receives the report, it has 72 hours to provide the tow truck operator with vehicle owner information. If the DOL cannot locate a vehicle record, it must return the abandoned vehicle report to the tow truck operator and request a vehicle identification number (VIN) inspection be done by law enforcement. If the DOL discovers that the vehicle was registered in another jurisdiction, the 72-hour deadline is waived so that a request for owner information can be made and processed by the jurisdiction in which the vehicle was last registered.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

HB 2753 authorizes subagents and county auditors to process surrendered vehicle titles and to update DOL vehicle records to reflect this information. The bill also authorizes subagents and county auditors to process abandoned vehicle reports submitted to them by tow truck operators. Under these provisions, if the DOL handles these transactions, the department will collect a \$3 fee on each transaction; if the county auditor processes these transactions, the auditor will collect a \$3 fee on each transaction; if a subagent processes these transactions, the subagent will collect a \$3.50 fee on each transaction, and will also collect a \$3 fee on behalf of, and to the credit of, the county in which the subagent operates.

Subagents and county auditors are authorized to provide vehicle owner information on abandoned vehicles to registered tow truck operators. This information must be provided within 72 hours of receiving the abandoned vehicle report, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state and federal holidays.

Subagents are granted the same authority county auditors currently have to handle mail-in registrations, which would include the processing of internet registration renewals. The \$3.50 fee currently collected by subagents for processing vehicle registration renewals would also apply to mail and internet-based transactions.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Language in the original bill, which established a \$1 fee to process the surrendered titles and abandoned vehicle reports of vehicles subject to the gross weight vehicle fee or the commercial trailer fee, is removed in the substitute bill.

A technical amendment is made to remove an RCW citation error.

An effect date of January 1, 2003, is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect January 1, 2003.

Testimony For: There will be a great improvement in customer service if subagents and agents of the DOL are allowed to handle these transactions because the processing time will speed up significantly.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Hatfield, prime sponsor; George Cohee, Jan Novak, and Don Burrell, Washington Association of Vehicle Subagents.