

Agriculture & Ecology Committee

SSB 5240

Brief Description: *Providing adjustments to motor vehicle emission inspection fees.*

Sponsors: *By Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Water (originally sponsored by Senators Regala, Swecker and Fraser; by request of Department of Ecology).*

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- *Caps the fee charged to a customer for a motor vehicle emissions inspection at \$26.00 and limits the portion of the inspection fee that is dedicated for reimbursement of the Department of Ecology's administrative costs at \$3.80.*

Hearing Date: *3/30/01*

Staff: *Jason Callahan (786-7117).*

Background:

The Department of Ecology (DOE) states in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) that gasoline powered motor vehicles emit significant quantities of hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen, in addition to serving as the primary emitters of carbon monoxide. Federal emissions standards are designed to reduce motor vehicle emissions; however, the DOE reports that the effectiveness of these efforts are reduced through deterioration, maladjustment, and tampering. In their administrative rules, DOE states that emission inspections serve to identify vehicles that are high polluting and vehicles with tampered or missing emission controls. Once the vehicles are identified, the DOE seeks to reduce their emissions if it can be accomplished at a reasonable cost.

The DOE conducts emission inspections on motor vehicles registered in the portions of the state designated by DOE as "emissions contributing areas." An area of the state may only be identified as an emission contributing area if the DOE first finds that the area is within a "non-compliance" area for motor vehicle emissions. Currently in the WAC, the DOE has listed the cities of Seattle, Bellevue, Spokane, Tacoma, Vancouver, and Everett as non-compliance areas. Within each non-compliance area, the DOE identifies by zip code the

smallest land area containing registered motor vehicles significantly contributing to air quality degradation. Vehicles registered within the identified zip codes that are older than five years or newer than twenty-five years are subject to emission testing biennially.

The owner of a vehicle registered in an emissions contributing area must pay a fee to have a emission inspection conducted. The amount of that fee is set in rule by the DOE, and must be applicable state-wide or throughout an emissions control area. The fee may not exceed fifteen dollars, and surplus money collected is paid to the state general fund. Fees must be calculated to compensate the contracted inspection facility owner and to offset the general fund appropriation made to the DOE to cover the administrative costs of the inspection program.

Summary of Bill:

The fee charged to a customer for a motor vehicle emissions inspection is capped at \$26.00 and the portion of the inspection fee that is dedicated for reimbursement of the Department of Ecology's administrative costs is limited to \$3.80 per inspection.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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