

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5494

As Passed Senate, March 14, 2001

Title: An act relating to noise prevention for motor vehicles.

Brief Description: Clarifying noise laws for motor vehicles.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen and McAuliffe).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/19/01, 3/6/01 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/14/01, 37-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5494 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Benton; Eide, Finkbeiner, Horn, Jacobsen, Johnson, Kastama, McAuliffe, McDonald, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, T. Sheldon, Shin and Swecker.

Staff: Jennifer Ziegler (786-7316)

Background: In 1977, the Legislature enacted laws to make motor vehicle equipment requirements consistent with federal law. Currently, every motor vehicle must be equipped with a muffler in good working order and in constant operation to prevent excessive or unusual noise. Current law also prohibits modification of an exhaust system of a motor vehicle in a way which will make the engine noise louder than the noise emitted by the muffler originally installed on the vehicle.

Summary of Bill: Modification of the exhaust system of a motor vehicle is prohibited if the modification violates Society of Automotive Engineer's standards regarding adequate muffling devices. This prohibition does not apply to passenger vehicles operated off highways in an organized racing or competitive event conducted by a recognized sanctioning body.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Individuals who are interested in high performance vehicles are concerned that current law regarding muffler noise is subjective and does not set out clear standards. Modification of mufflers is often done to enhance performance, not to increase noise. People who participate in sanctioned races want to be able to drive their cars home.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Jacobsen, prime sponsor; Matthew Ahl, student.

House Amendment(s): Erroneous noise standard language is replaced with the correct noise standard for motor vehicles. Vehicles over 25 years old are added to the allowable exemptions.