

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6113

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 12, 2002

Title: An act relating to use of high-occupancy vehicle lanes by ultra- fuel-efficient vehicles.

Brief Description: Allowing ultra-fuel-efficient vehicles to use HOV lanes.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/7/01, 3/8/01 [DPS]; 2/4/02, 2/12/02 [DP2S, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6113 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Benton, Finkbeiner, Jacobsen, Keiser, Prentice, Shin and Swecker.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe and McDonald.

Staff: Tami Neilson (786-7452)

Background: High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes were created to encourage carpools and reduce traffic congestion.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) may allow HOV lanes to be used by single-occupant ultra-fuel-efficient vehicles at times and locations when the addition of these vehicles would not unduly contribute to congestion or impede the flow of traffic and when proper permits are displayed. The cost for ultra-fuel-efficient vehicle permits is \$200. Monies collected from issuing permits are deposited in the multi-modal transportation account. Ultra-fuel-efficient vehicles are those that average more than 46 miles per gallon of fuel, as certified by the manufacturer.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement that WSDOT allow ultra-fuel-efficient vehicles to use HOV lanes is changed from mandatory to permissive. WSDOT is permitted to determine where and when these vehicles would be allowed to use the HOV lanes. Annual permits must be purchased and displayed by ultra-fuel-efficient vehicle operators in order to use HOV lanes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 7, 2002.

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

Testimony For: This will motivate people to buy and use hybrids.

Testimony Against: If HOV lanes can only be used by clean vehicles when the freeways are uncongested, the purpose of the bill is defeated. **With Concerns:** The HOV lanes are for moving people. An expectation may be created that hybrids can always use HOV lanes, and they may have to be prohibited at some point. Some HOV lanes have reached capacity. Confusion would be created because some HOV lanes would allow hybrids while others would not.

Testified: Senator Swecker, prime sponsor; Toby Rickman, DOT; Donna Ewing, LOWVWA.