

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6463

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, January 29, 2002

Title: An act relating to requirements for a commercial driver's license.

Brief Description: Requiring English language ability for a commercial driver's license.

Sponsors: Senators Gardner, Benton, Haugen, Horn, Hochstatter and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/23/02, 1/29/02 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6463 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Benton, Finkbeiner, Kastama, Keiser, McDonald, Oke and T. Sheldon.

Staff: Dean Carlson (786-7305)

Background: In order to obtain a commercial driver's license to drive a commercial vehicle, an applicant must pass a knowledge and skills test for driving a commercial motor vehicle. The test must meet certain minimum federal standards as established by federal regulations in 49 C.F.R. part 383, as well as other requirements imposed by state law or federal regulation.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A commercial driver's license test must require that an applicant show that he or she can read and speak the English language sufficiently to explain emergencies and receive direction from the general public, to understand highway traffic signs and signals, to respond to official inquiries, and to make entries on reports and records.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute changes the provision that a CDL applicant be able to converse in English with the general public, to the applicant being able to sufficiently explain emergencies and receive direction from the general public.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 2002.

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

Testimony For: We think that drivers of large trucks be able to sufficiently speak the English language for safety reason. Law enforcement needs to be able to communicate with a driver on a quick basis in an emergency situation.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jay Lawley, Washington Trucking Association (pro).