
Transportation Committee

HB 1381

Brief Description: Requiring flat license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Ericksen, Shabro, Jarrett, McDonald, Schindler, Kristiansen, Bailey and Buck.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Licensing to issue flat, digitally printed license plates, the manufacturing of which must be contracted out to a private vendor.

Hearing Date: 2/12/03

Staff: Reema Griffith (786-7301).

Background:

The current license plate production system used by the Department of Licensing (DOL) has been in place since 1927 and involves a labor intensive process of manually stamping each plate set, with the labor being provided by the inmates at the Walla Walla State Penitentiary. Because of the current labor intensive production process, it is very difficult to produce plates out of sequential order or to switch randomly between the different plate series'.

Over the years, technology has managed to address the inflexible nature of the current stamping process. A computer driven manufacturing process has been created that digitally prints the license plate numbers on paper like material which is then adhered to the metal sheeting to form a license plate. Because all of the plate information is inputted via computer, the process allows the operator to randomly print license plate numbers in any order and to intermix the printing of the various plate series', all in one print run. While this technology is attractive, to implement such a system the State would, at a minimum, require the acquisition of new equipment and training of the inmates on how to use the new system and machinery.

Summary of Bill:

Requires the Department of Licensing to issue flat, digitally printed license plates. DOL may no longer utilize correctional industries to manufacture the plates, but rather, the

manufacturing of the plates must be contracted out to a private vendor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 6, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.