
Transportation Committee

HB 2908

Brief Description: Strengthening accountability for salvage vehicles.

Sponsors: Representatives Mielke, O'Brien, Ahern, Pearson and Boldt.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds inspection and documentation requirements for salvage vehicles, authorizes WSP to adopt rules relating to salvage vehicles, and amends the definition of salvage vehicle.

Hearing Date: 2/2/04

Staff: Page Scott (786-7301).

Background:

Under current law, when a vehicle is wrecked beyond repair or declared a total loss, the owner must surrender the title and registration to the Department of Licensing (DOL) within 15 days of the accident. Once the title is surrendered to the DOL on the grounds of being a total loss, the vehicle is considered a "salvage vehicle." If the salvage vehicle is rebuilt, current law requires that the DOL issue a special title and registration with the words "WA Rebuilt" displayed across the front of the document. After inspecting the rebuilt vehicle, the Washington State Patrol (WSP) inscribes a marking on the inside of the driver's side door indicating the vehicle was previously destroyed or declared a total loss.

In order to be designated as a salvage vehicle, the vehicle must 1) be damaged to the extent that the cost of repairs plus the salvage value make the vehicle uneconomical to repair; 2) have a model year designation of a calendar year that is less than six years before the calendar year in which the vehicle was wrecked, destroyed, or damaged; or 3) have a model year designation of a calendar year that is less than twenty years before the calendar year in which the vehicle was wrecked, destroyed, or damaged and have a fair market value of at least \$6,500 prior to being destroyed.

The WSP does not have specific rulemaking authority relating to salvage vehicles and salvage vehicle inspections.

Summary of Bill:

The Chief of the WSP is permitted to adopt, apply, and enforce rules pertaining to salvage vehicles and salvage vehicle inspections necessary for the public's welfare and safety.

The term "salvage vehicle" applies to vehicles damaged to the extent that the cost of parts and labor to repair them exceed 60 percent of their retail value. The model year and fair market value limitations under current law remain unchanged.

A physical examination is required for vehicles declared totaled or salvage under Washington law. The physical examination is also required for salvage vehicles from other states that have not been rebuilt or repaired within the jurisdiction of that state.

An inspection must verify that the vehicle identification number is genuine and agrees with the number shown on the original documents supporting the vehicle purchase or ownership. If the vehicle to be inspected has been rebuilt or repaired, all invoices, must be shown at the time of inspection. If the presenter is unable to provide proof of ownership for the vehicle or major component parts, an inspection must be completed for ownership-in-doubt purposes.

A vehicle must have all damaged major component parts replaced or repaired and the vehicle presented for inspection must meet all lighting and equipment standards specified in RCW 46.37.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.