

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6001

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Highways & Transportation, March 6, 2003

Title: An act relating to lawful vehicle combinations.

Brief Description: Legalizing a motor vehicle, travel trailer, and boat trailer combination.

Sponsors: Senator Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Highways & Transportation: 3/5/03, 3/6/03 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6001 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Horn, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Swecker, Vice Chair; Esser, Haugen, Jacobsen, Mulliken and Prentice.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Kastama.

Staff: Dean Carlson (786-7305)

Background: Current law prohibits any combination of vehicles consisting of more than two vehicles. There is an exemption for a truck-tractor, semitrailer, semitrailer or full trailer combination, as well as four trucks or truck tractors used in a driveaway service.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A vehicle combination consisting of a motor vehicle weighing more than 4,000 pounds unladen, a travel trailer, and a trailer designed for hauling a boat, snowmobiles or nonhighway vehicles is authorized. The combination must not exceed 65 feet in length. The braking capacity must conform with RCW 46.37.351 and must have progressive braking. A person operating this combination must have an endorsement issued by the Department of Licensing.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The limit on the length requirement for a travel trailer is removed. Brakes must conform to requirements in 46.37.351. The substitute requires a driver of this combination to have an endorsement issued by the Department of Licensing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: We have no data from this state, however multiple trailers are less stable than a single trailer. Combination vehicles often cannot avoid mistakes by passenger cars. This could decrease freight mobility and increase congestion. Currently, only the most experienced commercial drivers drive triple trailers. These combinations have a tendency to fish tail more often and take a longer time to stop.

Testified: Toby Rickman, WSDOT (concerns); Fred Fakkema, WSP (concerns); Steve Lind, Traffic Safety Commission (con).