

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1180

As Passed House:

March 3, 2005

Title: An act relating to vehicle length and width measurement exclusive devices and specialized equipment.

Brief Description: Harmonizing vehicle size limits with federal rules.

Sponsors: By Representatives Kilmer, Wallace and Woods; by request of Department of Transportation.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/27/05, 2/3/05 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/05, 96-1.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Grants the Department of Transportation the authority to adopt rules for size and weight criteria for vehicles considered to be specialized equipment by the Federal Highway Administration or the Department of Transportation.
- Grants the Department of Transportation the authority to adopt rules regarding devices that can be excluded from vehicle length and width calculations.
- Revises the standard for side mirrors to conform with RCW 46.37.400.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Wallace, Vice Chair; Woods, Ranking Minority Member; Skinner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Buck, Campbell, Curtis, Dickerson, Ericksen, Flannigan, Hankins, Hudgins, Jarrett, Kilmer, Lovick, Morris, Nixon, Schindler, Sells, Shabro, Simpson, B. Sullivan, Takko, Upthegrove and Wood.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

Vehicles considered to be "specialized equipment" include auto and boat carriers, certain cranes, concrete pumper trucks and various well drilling apparatus. Many of these vehicle classes are permitted on a class by class basis, and some are unable to operate due to

incompatibilities with current law. The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) recently adopted a federal rule in the category of specialized equipment regarding a vehicle combination used for moving explosives. In order for this vehicle to operate in Washington, changes to current law would need to be made.

The FHA also revised its Federal National Safety Standard regarding external rearview mirrors used on vehicles engaged in interstate transport. Washington law, which does not allow mirrors to extend more than five inches from the side of the vehicle, is now out of compliance with the FHA rule. In addition, the federal list of devices excluded from vehicle length and width measurements is dynamic, doubling in the last five years, with further revisions nearing adoption. Each change places state law out of compliance.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Transportation is authorized to adopt rules regulating the size and weight of vehicles considered to be specialized equipment by the FHA, in the case of interstate travel, or the Department of Transportation, in the case of intrastate travel.

The partial list of safety and energy conservation devices that are excluded from the vehicle width and length requirements is repealed. Instead, the Department of Transportation is required to adopt rules identifying certain devices attached to vehicles for safety, energy conservation, or other necessary purposes. These devices are excluded from calculations of the vehicles length or width, provided that these devices are not designed or used to carry cargo.

External rearview mirrors are no longer limited to extending no more than five inches beyond the width limit of the vehicle. The mirrors may extend beyond the width limits of the vehicle to a point that allows conformance with the Federal National Safety Standard and state law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The state must certify compliance with federal regulations before it can receive its federal highway apportionment. The federal rules have changed, taking the state out of compliance. This legislation brings the state back into compliance and gives the Department of Transportation rulemaking authority to keep the state in compliance. This bill will assist the state patrol with enforcement.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Tim Erickson, Washington State Department of Transportation; and Fred Fakkema, Washington State Patrol.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.