

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5023

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 9, 2005

Title: An act relating to vehicle headlights.

Brief Description: Requiring headlights when wipers are used.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/26/05, 2/9/05 [DPS, w/oRec]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5023 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Jacobsen, Vice Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Eide and Oke.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Esser and Mulliken.

Staff: Dalene Sprick (786-7321)

Background: Under current law, vehicle headlights, and all other lights required for different classes of vehicles (e.g., tail lamps, clearance lamps, etc.), must be on from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise. Vehicle lights are also required to be on when, due to insufficient light or unfavorable atmospheric conditions, visibility is less than 1,000 feet.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Headlights must be on when windshield wipers are in use due to snow, rain, fog, or other sight limiting conditions.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The Washington State Patrol expressed support for the bill, however, expressed concerns related to enforcement due to the wording. Support was also expressed for the notion of making it easier for the driver to see and for others to be able to see the vehicle. Concerns were raised related to individuals forgetting to turn off the headlights and ending up with dead batteries.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Fred Fakkema, Washington State Patrol; Steve Lind, Traffic Safety Commission.