

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6725

As of February 02, 2006

Title: An act relating to prohibiting motor vehicles towing trailers from using high-occupancy vehicle lanes.

Brief Description: Prohibiting motor vehicles towing trailers from using high-occupancy vehicle lanes.

Sponsors: Senator Haugen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/25/06.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Under current law, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and local governments may reserve any portion of a highway under their respective jurisdictions for the exclusive use of public transportation vehicles or private motor vehicles carrying no fewer than a specified number of passengers. These reserved portions of a highway are popularly known as "high-occupancy vehicle lanes" or "HOV lanes." However, the term "high-occupancy vehicle" is not currently defined in statute.

Current law generally prohibits vehicles towing trailers from being driven in the left-hand lanes of limited access roadways having three or more lanes for traffic moving in one direction. However, vehicles towing trailers may be driven in high-occupancy vehicle lanes, even if the HOV lane is on the left-hand side of a highway.

Summary of Bill: Motor vehicles towing trailers are prohibited from using high-occupancy vehicle lanes on public highways, regardless of the number of occupants in the vehicle.

"High-occupancy vehicle" is defined as a public transportation vehicle or a private motor vehicle carrying no fewer than a specified number of passengers as designated by the appropriate jurisdiction.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 2006.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This bill was requested by a constituent who saw a dangerous traffic incident where a trailer was being towed in an HOV lane.

Testimony Against: None.

Testimony Other: Just like the existing rule, adopted by the Department of Transportation, that allows motorcycles to tow trailers in left lanes, this bill should be amended to allow motorcycles to tow small trailers in HOV lanes.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Haugen, sponsor.

OTHER: Larry Walker, WA Road Riders Assoc.