

Transportation Committee

SSB 6816

**Brief Description:** Concerning special permitting for certain farm implements.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senator Schoesler).

<p><b>Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation to review the agency rules regarding the transporting of farm implements over 14 feet in height.</li> </ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 2/26/10

**Staff:** Jerry Long (786-7306).

**Background:**

A farm implement includes any device that directly affects the production of agricultural products, including fertilizer and chemical applicator apparatus (complete with auxiliary equipment).

It is unlawful for any vehicle or load to exceed a height of 14 feet. The 14-foot height limit applies to farm implements.

A farmer or farm implement dealer may obtain a quarterly or annual permit for implements over 16 feet wide to under 20 feet wide, less than 45,000 pounds and having a combined length not to exceed 70 feet. The permit requires a letter from the farmer or implement dealer to Motor Carrier Services requesting an approval letter, which allows the permit to be issued for specific counties from any Washington State Department of Transportation permit office. Generally, the special permit to move farm implements is restricted to six counties or less.

Fees:	Farmer	\$10.00 per quarter	\$25.00 per year
	Dealer	\$25.00 per quarter	\$100.00 per year

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The ability to acquire a special permit to move oversize farm implements will not be affected if the implement(s) is carried on another vehicle, unless one of the following circumstances occurs:

- The authorized user of the permit is not a farmer, or anyone engaged in the business of selling, repairing or maintaining farm implements.
- The loaded farm implement creates a combined height that exceeds 14 feet; or
- The loaded farm implement causes the hauling vehicle to exceed legal weight limits. The farm implement may weigh up to 45,000 pounds.

These require a three-day oversize/overweight permit, but the quarterly or annual permit may not be used under these circumstances.

When transporting the farm implement, several safety precautions must be used including oversized load signs, adherence to published curfew or commuter hour restrictions, the use of red flags on implement's corners, the use of warning lights and slow moving vehicle emblems, and the use of escort vehicles. Farmers and farm implement dealers are exempt from escort vehicle operator certification requirements and the use of height measuring devices on escort vehicles.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is directed to review administrative rules that contain the 14-foot height limitation for the agricultural implement special permit. In conducting the review, the WSDOT must invite representatives of farmers, farm equipment dealers, the Washington State Patrol's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Office, and other interested stakeholders to participate.

The WSDOT is to consider specific areas of the state where there is a need for transporting farm implements over 14 feet in height, and the ability to provide an exception to that limit without causing damage to road overpasses or other overhead obstructions. The WSDOT is encouraged to conduct its review in a timely manner so that any rule changes can be implemented expeditiously.

The WSDOT is to report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over transportation and agricultural issues by December 1, 2010, the findings and conclusions of its review.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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