

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5556

As Amended by House, April 16, 2009

Title: An act relating to toll enforcement for infractions detected through the use of a photo enforcement system.

Brief Description: Concerning toll enforcement for infractions detected through the use of a photo enforcement system.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Kilmer, Carrell and Kauffman).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/12/09, 2/17/09 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/06/09, 42-3.

Passed House: 4/16/09, 98-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5556 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Berkey, Delvin, Eide, Jarrett, Kastama, Kauffman, Kilmer, King, Ranker and Sheldon.

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7429)

Background: Drivers that do not pay a toll when they cross the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge are subject to an infraction. The infraction is \$40 plus an additional toll penalty of three times the cash toll for a standard passenger car during peak hours, currently \$4. The court remits the toll penalty to the Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT) and it is deposited into the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Toll Account.

Any reduction in the total penalty imposed is made proportionally between the \$40 infraction penalty and the toll penalty.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Any reduction in the infraction must be made to the infraction penalty. The toll penalty may not be reduced. If the driver is found to have not committed an infraction, the driver must pay the toll due at the time the photograph was taken.

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.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Currently, when a violator contests a ticket, the toll infraction portion can be reduced below the base toll rate, leading to the Tacoma Narrows Toll Bridge Account getting less than a standard toll. By making the toll revenue a static amount, this becomes a more predictable stream of revenue. This makes toll setting easier for the Transportation Commission.

OTHER: This would require a system upgrade for the courts to perform or they would have to handle these tickets manually. Currently, the Tacoma Narrows Toll Bridge Account receives an average of \$6 per violator, which is \$2 more than the cash toll.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Robert Ryan, Citizen Advisory Committee; Randy Boss, citizen; Dan O'Neal, Transportation Commission Chair.

OTHER: Mellani McAleenan, Board for Judicial Administration.

House Amendment(s): The House amendments make the following changes:

1. Requires the DOT to report to the Legislature by December 1, 2009, with recommendations for implementing a time period allowing for the payment of tolls on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge prior to the issuance of an infraction.
2. Clarifies that a driver pay the toll, when the driver is found to have not committed the infraction, if the toll at issue has not been paid.