

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6207

PARTIAL VETO C 217 L 10 Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Allowing local governments to create golf cart zones.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senator Haugen).

Senate Committee on Transportation **House Committee on Transportation**

Background: Under Washington law, it is a traffic infraction for any person to drive or move a motor vehicle on any public road if the motor vehicle does not meet safety and equipment standards specified by statute or agency rule.

Two types of vehicles, neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs) and medium-speed electric vehicles (MEVs), may be operated, within certain conditions, on public roads even though these vehicles do not meet the safety and equipment standards required of higher speed vehicles. However, these vehicles must meet federal safety and equipment standards for low-speed vehicles. Under federal rule, a low-speed vehicle is defined as being capable of traveling at least 20 miles per hour (mph) but not more than 25 mph.

Under Washington law, NEVs are defined as capable of traveling at least 20 mph but not more than 25 mph. MEVs are defined as being capable of traveling at least 30 mph but not more than 35 mph.

Most golf carts, as originally manufactured, have a top speed of less than 20 mph.

Summary: Cities or counties may create golf cart zones by ordinance or resolution. The ordinance or resolution must be for the purpose of permitting incidental use of golf carts on public roads that have speed limits of 25 mph or less. Golf carts are defined as gas-powered or electric-powered four-wheeled vehicles, designed for use on a golf course, that cannot attain a speed higher than 20 mph.

Golf cart drivers within golf cart zones are subject to the same rules of the road as vehicle drivers. Other than rules of the road, golf carts and golf cart drivers within golf cart zones are not subject to most motor vehicle provisions, including provisions on nonhighway and off-road vehicles, vehicle licensing, driver licensing, and safety and equipment standards. However, golf cart occupants operating or riding in a golf cart within a golf cart zone are not

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exempt from the seatbelt requirements, and golf carts operating on public roads within a golf cart zone must be equipped with reflectors, seatbelts, and rearview mirrors.

A person operating a golf cart on public roads in golf cart zones must be at least 16 years old and must have either completed a driver education course or have previous experience driving as a licensed driver. However, a person who has a revoked license is prohibited from operating golf carts on public roads in golf cart zones.

Local jurisdictions that create golf cart zones may restrict the operation of golf carts to daylight hours and may prohibit the operation of golf carts in designated bicycle lanes that are within a golf cart zone. In addition, local jurisdictions may require a decal to be displayed on golf carts and may charge a fee for the decal.

Golf cart zones must be identified by signage, and accidents that involve golf carts operating on public roads within golf cart zones must be tracked under state reporting requirements.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	0	
House	96	2	(House amended)
Senate	44	1	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 10, 2010

Partial Veto Summary: The Governor vetoed the section exempting golf carts operating on public roads within golf cart zones from the child restraint (car seat) law.