

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 6346

---

---

### C 144 L 10

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Expanding the use of certain electric vehicles.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Ranker, Haugen, Regala, Rockefeller, Pridemore, Marr, King, Fraser, Swecker, Kilmer, Shin, Tom, Kohl-Welles and Kline).

#### **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. Equipment requirements for low-speed vehicles include headlights and taillights, a windshield, mirrors, turn signals, and seatbelts. Under federal rule, a low-speed vehicle is defined as having a speed attainable of more than 20 miles per hour (mph) but not more than 25 mph.

Under Washington law, NEVs are defined as having a speed attainable of more than 20 mph but not more than 25 mph, and MEVs are defined as having a speed attainable of more than 30 mph but not more than 35 mph.

Under Washington law, both NEVs and MEVs may be driven on city streets and county roads that are not state routes if the road has a speed limit of 35 mph or less. Both vehicle types must have a vehicle license, and operators must have a driver's license and liability insurance.

Local jurisdictions may prohibit NEVs on roads with a speed limit over 25 mph, and local jurisdictions may prohibit MEVs on roads with a speed limit over 35 mph.

**Summary:** In counties consisting of islands whose only connection to the mainland are ferry routes, a person may operate an NEV and MEV on city streets and county roads that are not

---

*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.*

state routes if the road has a speed limit of 45 mph or less. Currently, the increased speed limit in this provision will apply to only San Juan County.

The Department of Licensing is required to track all Washington-registered NEVs and MEVs in a separate registration category. In addition, accidents that involve NEVs or MEVs must be tracked separately.

Washington's definition of MEV is changed to bring its minimum speed attainable down from more than 30 mph to more than 25 mph. The definition change eliminates a gap between the definitions of NEVs and MEVs.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	47	0	
House	92	5	(House amended)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** June 10, 2010