

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6792

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 4, 2010

Title: An act relating to extending the agribusiness purposes exemption for certain commercial driver's license applicants.

Brief Description: Extending the agribusiness purposes exemption for certain commercial driver's license applicants.

Sponsors: Senators Hatfield, King, Marr and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/02/10, 2/04/10 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6792 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hatfield, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Haugen, Morton and Shin.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: In order to operate a commercial motor vehicle in Washington, a person generally must hold a commercial driver's license with the applicable endorsements for the vehicle that person is driving. However, this requirement does not apply to the following persons:

1. a firefighter or law enforcement officer operating emergency equipment who has completed an approved driver training course;
2. the operator of a recreational vehicle used for noncommercial purposes; or
3. the operator of a farm vehicle controlled and operated by a farmer.

To obtain a commercial drivers license, the person must:

1. have completed an approved training course, or been certified by an employer as having the necessary skills and training; and
2. have passed a knowledge test and a driving skills test.

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.

In 2009 the Legislature passed SHB 2223 that provided a temporary partial exemption for a person who operates a commercial motor vehicle for agricultural business purposes. The exemption was from the training course or employer skills and training certification requirement, but license applicants continue to be subject to the knowledge test and driving skills test.

This exemption is set to expire on July 1, 2011. The Department of Licensing was required to submit recommendations to the Legislature by January 1, 2010, on the continuance of this exemption.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): The date the exemption is set to expire is extended one year to July 1, 2013. The Department of Licensing is to report to the Legislature on its recommendations by January 1, 2013.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Instead of the partial exemption expiring on July 1, 2012, it expires on July 1, 2013. The date for the Department of Licensing to report on its recommendations was changed to January 1, 2013.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: None.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: The 160-hour course work for training may be fine if the driver is employed for 12 months out of a year. However, employment in the agri-business industry is only seasonal and it is hard to recoup the sizable investment for training in a short season. The agri-business industry takes the commercial drivers license exam very seriously and supports the requirement to pass the knowledge exam and driving skills test, but disagrees with the extensive training requirement.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Tom McBride, Far West Agribusiness Association; Bill Dewey, citizen.