
Transportation Committee

HB 2775

Brief Description: Concerning the periodic replacement of license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Liias, Armstrong, Clibborn and Wylie; by request of Department of Licensing.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes the one-time license plate replacement fee at seven years with an annual license plate replacement fee leading up to the license plate replacement.

Hearing Date: 2/15/12

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306).

Background:

License plates must be replaced periodically to ensure maximum legibility and reflectivity. The Department of Licensing (DOL) in 1997 (SHB 1008) was directed to use empirical studies to document the longevity of the reflective material used to make license plates and determine how often license plates need to be replaced providing the DOL authorization to adopt rules for implementation.

The decision of a seven-year replacement cycle was made based on replacement schedules from other states, the area weather, and industry data. A study group comprised of the DOL, Correctional Industries, law enforcement, and 3M, who is the major supplier of the license plate sheeting, conducted the research. The license plate sheeting at the time was warranted for reflectivity for five years. In 2006 the DOL engaged an outside firm, The FCS Group, to perform a study to evaluate the DOL's seven-year replacement schedule. The recommendation was to maintain the seven-year replacement cycle. The current seven-year replacement period is in rule and was accomplished through the Washington Administrative Code process.

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.

Current exemptions are: horseless carriage license plates; congressional medal of honor plates; and commercial vehicles with a gross weight greater than 26,000 pounds.

The current license plate replacement fee is \$10 per plate, plus a \$2 per plate reflectorization fee for a total fee for a two-plate vehicle of \$24. A single plate vehicle is \$12; and a motorcycle is \$4.

Summary of Bill:

The bill changes the one-time fee for the license plate replacement cycle to an annual fee leading up to the license plate replacement. The annual fee at the time of annual registration is: moped and motorcycle 25 cents; trailer \$1.25; and passenger car and trucks \$2.50. The license plate reflector fee and the license plate replacement fee are prorated at the time of original and renewal registration.

The bill applies to vehicle registrations that are due or will become due on or after July 1, 2013. The fees are based on a 10-year license plate replacement cycle.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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