

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1611

As Reported by House Committee On: Labor & Workforce Development

Title: An act relating to allowing lunch breaks for registered tow truck operators while requiring reasonable availability.

Brief Description: Allowing lunch breaks for registered tow truck operators while requiring reasonable availability.

Sponsors: Representatives Lias, Condotta, Pollet, Moscoso, Freeman and Ryu.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workforce Development: 2/13/13 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a registered tow truck operator to close the business for a lunch break if the operator posts a notice providing the telephone number of a person who can release impounded vehicles.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Green, Holy, Moeller, Ormsby and Short.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

Tow truck operators who impound vehicles from private or public property or who contract with law enforcement to provide towing must be registered with the Department of Licensing. Only a registered operator may impound a vehicle.

Certain requirements apply regarding an operator's business location and hours. An operator must post a sign at the business location where vehicles may be redeemed that includes

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information about the business hours, towing and storage charges, and vehicle redemption procedures.

On a day the operator is open for business, the business office must remain open with personnel present who can release impounded vehicles. The normal business hours of a towing service must be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays, excluding weekends and holidays. An operator must maintain personnel who can be contacted 24 hours a day to release impounded vehicles within a reasonable time.

Summary of Bill:

A registered tow truck operator may close the business office for a lunch break not to exceed one hour if a notice is posted, visible from the outside, providing a telephone number where personnel authorized to release impounded vehicles may be contacted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is not a labor management bill; it is really a towing regulation bill. Last year the bill went to Transportation and passed out of the House of Representatives unanimously. The towing industry is very regulated. For years, the rules allowed towing operators to close the office and take a lunch break, but when the Washington State Patrol reviewed its rules, it realized that the statutes did not actually allow that practice. Most tow truck operators are "mom and pop" operations with only one or two drivers. This bill is very important to small tow truck operations.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Stu Halsan, Towing and Recovery Association of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.