

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2219

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to golf cart zones established by cities or counties.

Brief Description: Concerning golf cart zones established by cities or counties.

Sponsors: Representatives Smith, Haler and Green.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/22/14 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the legislative authority creating a golf cart zone to restrict the regulation and safe operation of golf carts within the zone in ways that are more restrictive than state law.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Fitzgibbon, Freeman, Habib, Hawkins, Hayes, Johnson, Klippert, Kochmar, Moeller, Muri, Pike, Riccelli, Rodne, Ryu, Sells, Shea, Takko, Tarleton, Walkinshaw, Young and Zeiger.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

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 miles per hour (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.

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.

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 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 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.

Summary of Bill:

The ordinance or resolution creating a golf cart zone may include provisions for the regulation and safe operation of golf carts used on streets and highways within the zone that are more restrictive than state law requirements governing such zones.

The state law governing the establishment of golf cart zones must be liberally construed to effectuate its purposes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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 bill provides clarification of some confusion regarding the underlying law, and makes it clear that golf cart zones can be crafted in the way that a community prefers.

There are concerns regarding adding restrictions that are not currently in the state statute. Two municipalities in Island County have already established golf cart zones, but Island County itself has not authorized such zones because of concerns about preemption. Therefore no zones can be created in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Golf carts are useful for a wide variety of tasks, and golf cart zones were designed to allow for their use. Golf cart zones also have the advantage of providing a green form of transportation.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Smith, prime sponsor; Helen Price Johnson, Island County; Tom Cahill; Ronald Buzard; and Anita Jerome.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.