

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5616

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to the use of farm vehicles on public highways.

Brief Description: Concerning the use of farm vehicles on public highways.

Sponsors: Senators Sheldon, Smith, Schoesler, Hargrove, Hatfield, Hewitt and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 3/26/13, 4/1/13 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
(As Amended by Committee)

- Changes the radius for a farm-exempt vehicle used to travel between farms or other locations to engage in activities that support farming operations from 15 miles to 25 miles.
- Requires that farm exempt decals issued after the effective date of the bill must be visible from the rear of the vehicle.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Lias, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Bergquist, Farrell, Fitzgibbon, Freeman, Habib, Hayes, Johnson, Klippert, Kochmar, Kretz, Kristiansen, Moeller, Morris, O'Ban, Riccelli, Rodne, Ryu, Sells, Shea, Takko, Tarleton, Upthegrove and Zeiger.

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306).

Background:

A farmer may apply to the Department of Licensing for a farm-exempt decal at a cost of \$5 for farm implements, tractors, trailers, and other farm vehicles operated within a radius of 15

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miles of the farm where they are principally used or garaged. Farm-exempt vehicles include trailers designed as cook or bunk houses, trailers used exclusively for animal herding and temporarily operating upon the public highways, and trailers used exclusively to transport farm implements from one farm to another during daylight hours or at night when the trailer is equipped with lights that comply with applicable laws. The decal must be displayed on the farm vehicle so that it is clearly visible from outside the vehicle to identify that the vehicle is exempt from registration.

When applying for a farm decal, the farmer or the farmer's representative must provide a full description of the vehicle, vehicle purpose, where the vehicle is used or garaged, and any other information required by the Department of Licensing. A farm-exempt decal does not require renewal, and the exempt vehicle continues to be exempt until the status is suspended or revoked for misuse, or when the vehicle is no longer used as a farm vehicle.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The 15-mile radius is changed to 25 miles for a farm-exempt vehicle which may be used incidentally on public highways where it is principally used to travel between farms or other locations to engage in activities that support farming operations. The amended bill requires that farm-exempt decals issued after the effective date of the bill must be visible from the rear of the vehicle.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Bill:

The amendment adds the requirement that farm-exempt decals issued after the effective date of the bill must be visible from the rear of the vehicle.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill provides flexibility for farmers. The current statute is too restrictive in the current period since farmers may need to travel further to assist other farmers or to get to other locations to be involved in activities that are farm related. Many farmers are finding that they are traveling farther to get to markets, and many farmers share equipment to assist each other and this is where the extra mileage will help.

(Information only) The key factor is location, and a need for flexibility during harvest. During this period, farm vehicles are seen traveling between locations. Sometimes a farmer may need to travel further to get to a granary.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Scott Dilley, Washington Farm Bureau; and Holly Johnson, Washington State Grange.

(Information only) Rob Huss, Washington State Patrol.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.