

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5616

As Amended by House, April 9, 2013

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: 2/19/13, 2/25/13 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 3/11/13, 49-0.

Passed House: 4/09/13, 93-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Eide, Co-Chair; King, Co-Chair; Benton, Vice Co-Chair; Hobbs, Vice Co-Chair; Fain, Budget Leadership Cabinet; Brown, Carrell, Ericksen, Harper, Litzow, Rolfes, Schlicher, Sheldon and Smith.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Mullet.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Billig.

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7429)

Background: Farm vehicles that are used incidentally on public highways are exempt from vehicle registration, but a farmer must apply for a farm exempt decal. A farm exempt decal must be displayed on the farm vehicle so that it is clearly visible from outside the vehicle. A farm exempt decal allows a farm vehicle to be operated within a 15-mile radius of the farm where it is principally used or garaged.

Summary of Engrossed Bill: The 15-mile radius restriction is removed. A farm exempt vehicle may be used incidentally on public highways within 25 miles of the farm where is principally used to travel between farms or other locations to engage in activities that support farming operations.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill tightens and clarifies how farm vehicles may be used on public highways. This is important for farmers who may need to rent equipment from a town that is farther than 15 miles or share equipment between farms that are outside that radius. This allows them to be safer by using equipment that is appropriate for the job. Many small farms work off a patchwork of property and it is not uncommon for the parcels to be more than 15 miles apart. This would clarify that the farmer could travel between the locations.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Holli Johnson, WA State Grange; Scott Dilley, WA Farm Bureau.

House Amendment(s): Requires that farm exempt decals issued after the effective date of the bill must be visible from the rear of the vehicle.