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**ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL 1443**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives G. Hunt, S. Hunt, Condotta, Shea, Taylor, Scott, Riccelli, and Jinkins

AN ACT Relating to limiting fees charged by commercial parking businesses and requiring notice to customers; and adding a new chapter to Title 19 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Commercial parking business" means the entity that owns, leases, operates, or manages a commercial parking lot.

(2) "Commercial parking lot" means a covered or uncovered area with or without stalls for the purpose of parking motor vehicles for a fee, excluding on-street parking.

(3) "Event parking" means parking for which fees are charged outside of the rates normally charged for hourly or other periodic parking, or of the rates specified in any sign that may be posted on the commercial parking lot under section 2(1) of this act.

(4) "Late fee" means a fee or charge assessed on the customer for failure to pay a parking charge when it was due.

(5) "Parking charge" means a monetary fee charged to a parking customer for parking in a commercial parking lot, and includes fees charged for monthly parking, fees charged for reserved parking, fees charged for parking for a given amount of time, fees charged for event parking, and fees charged for unauthorized parking.

(6) "Parking customer" means a person who parks a vehicle in a commercial parking lot, and the registered owner of the vehicle; and also means a person or entity that enters into an agreement, written or otherwise, with a commercial parking business for parking services.

(7) "Unauthorized parking" means parking a vehicle:

(a) In a commercial parking lot in an area not designated for parking;

(b) In a reserved stall or area without permission of the commercial parking business;

(c) In a stall or area without paying the posted parking charge in advance when it is required or without paying a sufficient parking charge for the length of time the vehicle is parked;

(d) In more than one stall simultaneously without paying the appropriate parking charge for each stall;

(e) In a stall or area during event parking without paying the event parking rate; or

(f) In a stall or area without paying the parking charge provided in, or otherwise without complying with, the terms of an agreement between the parking customer and the commercial parking business.

(8) "Unauthorized vehicle" means a vehicle parked in a manner constituting unauthorized parking.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Except as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section, a commercial parking business may not charge a parking charge unless a sign is posted at the entrance to the parking lot that clearly indicates in letters and numbers at least two inches in height:

(a) The times and circumstances in which a parking charge will be charged;

(b) The amount of the parking charge, a schedule of hourly or daily rates, or a schedule of parking charges for different circumstances or durations;

(c) The circumstances under which a late fee will be assessed, the amount of the late fee, and the schedule on which late fees will be increased;

(d) The methods of payment accepted; and

(e) The name, telephone number, and address of the commercial parking business.

(2) A commercial parking business need not comply with subsection (1) of this section to charge a parking charge with respect to a specific parking customer when the commercial parking business has an agreement, written or otherwise, with the parking customer for parking services.

(3) A commercial parking business need not comply with subsection (1) of this section to charge a parking charge for event parking if the parking charge for the event is clearly disclosed to the parking customer upon entry to the commercial parking lot by an on-site attendant or by conspicuous signage posted at the entrance to the commercial parking lot.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) If the customer fails to pay the reasonable parking charge within thirty days of the date the charge was incurred and after notice as provided in section 2 of this act, then the customer is also liable to the commercial parking business for a late fee not to exceed fifty percent of the original parking charge.

(b) If the customer fails to pay the reasonable parking charge within sixty days and after notice as provided in section 2 of this act, then the customer is also liable to the commercial parking business for a late fee not to exceed one hundred percent of the original parking charge.

(c) In the event of court action on the parking charges, the court shall award statutory costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

(2)(a) The customer is not liable for any late fee unless the commercial parking business posted notice as provided in section 2 of this act and delivered written notice of the late fee to the customer within fifteen days of the date the late fee was incurred.

(b) Notice of an incurred late fee must include the amount of the late fee, the date the parking charge was incurred, the date the late fee will be increased if payment is not received and the amount of the increase, the license number of the unauthorized vehicle, and the name and address of the commercial parking business.

(c) The commercial parking business must deliver notice of a late fee either by first-class mail, postage prepaid, or by delivery to the registered owner of the vehicle through any commercially reasonable means.

(3) Nothing in this section prohibits a commercial parking business or its agent from allowing more than thirty days for a parking customer to pay a reasonable parking charge prior to assessing a late fee or a collection agency fee. Nothing in this section prohibits a commercial parking business or its agent from discounting any parking charges for payment within a specified time frame, or from notifying a parking customer that any parking charges will be discounted if paid within such time frame.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) A parking customer who engages in unauthorized parking is liable to the commercial parking business for a reasonable parking charge if notice of the amount of the parking charge is provided to such customer under section 5 of this act.

(2) The following is presumed reasonable parking charges for unauthorized parking:

(a) The posted parking charge that would be charged for the actual time the vehicle remains parked at the commercial parking lot; or

(b) A fee not to exceed one hundred fifty percent of the posted parking charge provided for in (a) of this subsection.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If a reasonable parking charge for unauthorized parking is to be charged in an amount other than the posted parking charge that would be charged for the actual time the vehicle remains parked, then the amount of the reasonable parking charge must be stated in letters and numbers at least two inches in height in a sign or signs that are conspicuously posted at the entrance to the commercial parking lot. In addition, written notice of the amount of the parking charge, however calculated, and the date or dates of the unauthorized parking, the license number of the unauthorized vehicle, and the name and address of the commercial parking business must be provided by any of the following means:

(1) By affixing the notice to the windshield of the vehicle, or otherwise conspicuously affixing it to the vehicle, while the vehicle is still parked at the commercial parking lot;

(2) By mailing the notice via first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the registered owner of the vehicle within the later of fifteen days after the effective date of this section or fifteen days after the date the unauthorized parking occurred; or

(3) By delivering the notice to the registered owner of the vehicle through any commercially reasonable means within the later of fifteen days after the effective date of this section or fifteen days after the date the unauthorized parking occurred.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The registered owner of an unauthorized vehicle in a commercial parking lot is presumed to be liable for parking charges. It is an affirmative defense of the registered owner, provable by clear and convincing evidence, that the person who parked the vehicle at the commercial parking lot was not authorized, either actually or impliedly, by the registered owner to use or drive the vehicle. Any notice provided under this chapter to the registered owner of an unauthorized vehicle is conclusively presumed to have been provided to every parking customer responsible for the parking charges associated with the unauthorized vehicle.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Nothing in this chapter precludes the right to commence action in a court under chapter 12.40 RCW for small claims.

(2) This chapter applies to all parking charges owing on or after the effective date of this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 7 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 19 RCW.

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