

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5207

As Passed Senate, February 24, 2015

Title: An act relating to office hours for registered tow truck operators.

Brief Description: Concerning office hours for registered tow truck operators.

Sponsors: Senators Liias and King.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/26/15, 1/27/15 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/24/15, 45-2.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators King, Chair; Fain, Vice Chair; Hobbs, Ranking Minority Member; Liias, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cleveland, Habib, Jayapal, Miloscia, Pedersen, Rivers and Sheldon.

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

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 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 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, excluding weekends and holidays. An operator must maintain personnel who can be contacted 24 hours per day to release impounded vehicles within 60 minutes.

Summary of Bill: Between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., a registered tow truck operator may close the business office for a lunch break if notice is posted, visible at the

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.

door. The lunch break may not exceed one hour. The notice must contain a telephone number where personnel authorized to release impounded vehicles may be contacted who are able to return in no more than 30 minutes to release the vehicle. If the caller redeems the vehicle upon the tow truck personnel's return, then the accrual of the charges for storage cease at the time the call was made.

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 is the definition of a good little bill. This bill is to help the smallest of our tow operators who cannot take a lunch break because state law says that they must be open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We have introduced this bill three times now and it is very simple and straightforward. We added a consumer protection component by requiring that the tow operator be able to come back and open up the business to release a vehicle within 30 minutes of anyone that calls them. This bill has nothing to do with labor laws. Eighty-eight percent of our registered tow truck operators are small operators that this will really help.

OTHER: The State Patrol is neutral. This bill is a workable solution for both the public and our inspectors and provides clear provisions for what is expected of the tow business.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Liias, prime sponsor, Stuart Halsan, Towing and Recovery Assn. of WA.

OTHER: Rob Huss, WA State Patrol.