
Transportation Committee

HB 1272

Brief Description: Creating a motor vehicle registration hiatus for certain motor vehicles that are not operated on public roads.

Sponsors: Representatives Harmsworth, Orcutt, Bergquist, Rodne, Muri, Stokesbary, MacEwen, Condotta and Young.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a motor vehicle registration hiatus process.
- Allows the registered owner of a vehicle, or the owner's authorized representative, to apply for a vehicle registration hiatus, relieving the registered owner of the legal obligation to obtain an original vehicle registration upon acquiring a motor vehicle or renew the registration before it expires.
- Amends relevant sections of the code to conform with the addition of the vehicle registration hiatus.

Hearing Date: 1/25/17

Staff: Patricia Hasan (786-7292).

Background:

In Washington, vehicles must be registered and must display license plates or decals assigned by the Department of Licensing (DOL) as indication. It is unlawful for a person to operate any vehicle on a public highway without having proper vehicle registration and license plates displayed. A person operating a vehicle on public highways without first obtaining initial registration is guilty of a traffic infraction and must pay a fine of \$529. Failure to renew an expired registration before operating a vehicle on public highways is a traffic infraction. Vehicle owners must also carry the registration certificate when operating the vehicle (for which the registration is for) and shall permit an inspection of the vehicle registration certificate by any local authorities, police officers, or any representative of the DOL.

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.

A vehicle owner may operate an unregistered vehicle (which includes when license tabs have expired) on public highways if issued a trip permit from the field offices of the Department of Transportation, the DOL, county auditors, or other agents or subagents appointed by the DOL director. The trip permit allows the operation of a single vehicle for a period of three consecutive days beginning with the day of first use. No more than three trip permits may be used for any one vehicle in a 30 consecutive day period. No more than two trip permits may be used for any one recreational vehicle in a one-year period.

Summary of Bill:

A vehicle registration hiatus process is created. A registered owner of a vehicle, or the owner's authorized representative, may apply for a vehicle registration hiatus from the DOL, county auditor, or other agent or subagent appointed by the DOL director. The submitted hiatus form relieves the registered owner of the legal obligation to obtain an original vehicle registration upon acquiring a motor vehicle (which includes mopeds, motorcycles, passenger cars, or sport utility vehicles) or to renew the registration.

The hiatus form also certifies that the motor vehicle will not be operated on public roads. If the need arises to transport the motor vehicle, a trip permit must first be obtained from the state. The registered owner of the vehicle, the driver, or both found operating a vehicle with a registration on hiatus status and without a trip permit is found guilty of a traffic infraction and subject to a fine of up to \$500. However, it is an adequate defense for the registered owner of the vehicle in the case of theft of the motor vehicle or when the driver of the vehicle is responsible for the infraction without the registered owner's knowledge.

A vehicle registration hiatus must be for at least 30 days. At any time after the 30-day period, the registered owner or the owner's authorized representative may apply for an original vehicle registration or a renewal for the motor vehicle. The registration will be assigned a year and month based on the date of application for registration, and the vehicle registration is valid for a full 12-month period. The DOL or any other public agency may not require a registered owner of a privately owned motor vehicle to apply for a vehicle registration hiatus nor impose penalties on a registered vehicle owner for failure to apply for a registration hiatus.

Relevant sections of the code are also amended to conform with the addition of the vehicle registration hiatus.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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