

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6176

As of February 5, 2018

Title: An act relating to governing the use of narrow track vehicles.

Brief Description: Governing the use of narrow track vehicles.

Sponsors: Senators Billig and Baumgartner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/31/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a new class of motor vehicle for narrow track vehicles (NTVs), and a new sub-class within this class for short narrow track vehicles.
- Permits NTVs to operate on roadway lanes in the same manner as motorcycles.
- Authorizes NTVs to park at an angle and to use motorcycle only parking stalls, unless otherwise prohibited by local ordinance.
- Adds NTVs to the list of vehicles that may be authorized to use high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, so long as the authorization is not in conflict with federal requirements.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: Vehicle Classification. NTVs are not a designated category of motor vehicle. As a result, laws that apply to motor vehicles also apply to NTVs.

HOV Lane Usage. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and county, city, and town highway authorities are authorized to reserve all or any portion of a highway under their jurisdictions as HOV lanes and designate them for the exclusive or preferential use of the following vehicles: (1) public transportation vehicles; (2) motorcycles; (3) private motor vehicles carrying no fewer than a specified number of

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passengers; or (4) certain private transportation provider vehicles with the capacity to carry eight or more passengers if this use does not interfere with the efficiency, reliability, or safety of public transportation operations.

Triggered Traffic Control Signals. If the operator of a bicycle, moped, or street legal motorcycle approaches a traffic control signal that is controlled by a triggered traffic control signal using a vehicle detection device that is inoperative due to the size or composition of the bicycle, moped, or street legal motorcycle, the operator must bring the vehicle to a complete stop. If the traffic control signal fails to operate after one cycle of the traffic signal, the operator may, after exercising due care, proceed through the intersection or turn left.

Parking. In the absence of local law permitting angled parking, vehicles stopped or parked on a roadway must park parallel to the curb. Local authorities may permit angled parking on any roadway, although WSDOT approval is required if the roadway is a federal-aid or state highway.

Roadway Lane Usage. All motorcycles are entitled to the full use of a roadway lane, and no motor vehicle may be driven in a manner that deprives a motorcycle of the full use of a lane. Notwithstanding this prohibition, motorcycles are permitted to operate two abreast—but no more than two abreast—in a single lane.

The operator of a motorcycle is not permitted to overtake and pass a vehicle in the same lane as that vehicle, unless a pedestrian or bicyclist is being passed and a safe passing distance of at least three feet is being maintained. Neither is a motorcycle permitted to be operated between lanes of traffic or adjacent lines or rows of vehicles. These prohibitions do not apply to police officers in the performance of their official duties.

Summary of Bill: Vehicle Classification. A new class of motor vehicle is established for NTVs, which are defined as fully enclosed motor vehicles with three or four wheels that do not exceed 40 inches in width. Within this new class of vehicles, a subclass is established for short narrow track vehicles, which are NTVs that do not exceed 102 inches in length.

HOV Lane Usage. WSDOT and county, city, and town highway authorities are authorized to include NTVs as a class of vehicle permitted to use HOV lanes. If this authorization is in conflict with federal requirements that must be met in order for the state to receive federal funds, it is inoperative.

Triggered Traffic Control Signals. The law in place for operators of bicycles, mopeds, and street legal motorcycles approaching traffic control signals controlled by a triggered traffic control signal is expanded to include NTVs. If the operator of an NTV approaches a traffic control signal that is controlled by a triggered traffic control signal using a vehicle detection device that is inoperative due to the size or composition of the NTV, the operator of the NTV must bring it to a complete stop. If the traffic control signal fails to operate after one cycle of the traffic signal, the operator may, after exercising due care, proceed through the intersection or turn left.

Parking. When local authorities permit angled parking of motorcycles on a roadway, short NTVs must also be permitted to use angled parking, unless they are specifically prohibited from using angled parking by local ordinance.

Short NTVs must be permitted to park in parking stalls restricted to motorcycle-only parking, unless they are specifically prohibited from parking in these stalls by local ordinance.

Roadway Lane Usage. Laws related to roadway lane usage that are applicable to motorcycles also apply to NTVs. All NTVs are entitled to the full use of a roadway lane, and no motor vehicle may be driven in a manner that deprives an NTV of the full use of a lane. NTVs are permitted to operate two abreast—but no more than two abreast—in a single lane.

The operator of a NTV is not permitted to overtake and pass a vehicle in the same lane as that vehicle, unless a pedestrian or bicyclist is being passed and a safe passing distance of at least three feet is being maintained. A NTV is not permitted to be operated between lanes of traffic or adjacent lines or rows of vehicles.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: These vehicles just make a lot of sense. I see that in addition to the Tango, there are other cars out there.

CON: I have some serious concerns. A lot of this bill would treat these new vehicles like motorcycles, but they are not motorcycles and have not been trained how to drive like a motorcycle. Parking one of these cars inside the same stall as a motorcycle may not work the same as parking motorcycles next to each other in the same stall. These drivers would not understand how much room to give a motorcycle. Also, this bill would allow a narrow track vehicle to drive in the same lane next to a motorcycle. Again this is not safe and without training, motorcyclists would likely be surprised to suddenly find a car next to them in the lane which is dangerous.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Andy Billig, Prime Sponsor; Rick Woodbury, President and founder, Commuter Cars Corporation.

CON: Larry Walker, Washington Road Riders Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.