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**SENATE BILL 6597**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Sheldon and O'Ban

AN ACT Relating to vehicle combinations that may be operated on public highways; and amending RCW 46.44.030 and 46.44.037.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 46.44.030 and 2018 c 105 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) It is unlawful for any person to operate upon the public highways of this state any vehicle having an overall length, with or without load, in excess of forty feet. This restriction does not apply to (a) a municipal transit vehicle, (b) auto stage, private carrier bus, school bus, or motor home with an overall length not to exceed forty-six feet, (c) an articulated auto stage with an overall length not to exceed sixty-one feet, excluding a bike rack up to four feet in length, or (d) an auto recycling carrier up to forty-two feet in length manufactured prior to 2005.

(2)(a) It is unlawful for any person to operate upon the public highways of this state any combination consisting of a tractor and semitrailer that has a semitrailer length in excess of fifty-three feet or a combination consisting of a tractor and two trailers in which the combined length of the trailers exceeds sixty-one feet, with or without load.

(b) The restriction under this subsection does not apply to two trailers or semitrailers with a total weight that does not exceed twenty-six thousand pounds and when the two trailers or semitrailers do not carry property but constitute inventory property of a manufacturer, distributor, or dealer of such trailers. The total combination under this subsection (2)(b) may not exceed eighty-two feet of overall length.

(c) The restriction under this subsection does not apply to combinations of commercial vehicles operating on highways federally approved and designated by the state department of transportation as authorized by RCW 46.44.037(4).

(3) It is unlawful for any person to operate on the highways of this state any combination consisting of a truck and trailer, or log truck and stinger-steered pole trailer, with an overall length, with or without load, in excess of seventy-five feet. "Stinger-steered," as used in this section, means the coupling device is located behind the tread of the tires of the last axle of the towing vehicle.

(4)(a) The length limitations under this section do not apply to vehicles transporting poles, pipe, machinery, or other objects of a structural nature that cannot be dismembered and operated by a public utility when required for emergency repair of public service facilities or properties, but in respect to night transportation every such vehicle and load thereon shall be equipped with a sufficient number of clearance lamps on both sides and marker lamps upon the extreme ends of any projecting load to clearly mark the dimensions of the load.

(b) Excluded from the calculation of length under this section are certain devices that provide added safety, energy conservation, or are otherwise necessary, and are not designed or used to carry cargo. The length-exclusive devices must be identified in rules adopted by the department of transportation under RCW 46.44.101.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.44.037 and 2016 c 22 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

Notwithstanding the provisions of RCW 46.44.036 and subject to such rules and regulations governing their operation as may be adopted by the state department of transportation, operation of the following combinations is lawful:

(1) A combination consisting of a truck tractor, a semitrailer, and another semitrailer or a full trailer. In this combination a converter gear used to convert a semitrailer into a full trailer shall be considered to be a part of the full trailer and not a separate vehicle. A converter gear being pulled without load and not used to convert a semitrailer into a full trailer may be substituted in lieu of a full trailer or a semitrailer in any lawful combination;

(2) A combination consisting of a truck tractor carrying a freight compartment no longer than eight feet, a semitrailer, and another semitrailer or full trailer that meets the legal length requirement for a truck and trailer combination set forth in RCW 46.44.030;

(3) A motor home or travel trailer with a cargo extension, provided that there are no trailers or secondary cargo extensions or units attached to the cargo extension.

(4) Upon federal approval of a variance to the freeze of state law imposed by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, the state department of transportation must implement rules to allow combinations of vehicles consisting of a truck tractor and three trailing units to operate on designated public highways of the state. The state department of transportation may also specify by rule other operating conditions to ensure a safe and efficient highway system.

(a) The state department of transportation must collect data to describe the:

(i) Volumes of combinations of vehicles consisting of a truck tractor with three trailing units and segments of the trucking industry taking advantage of the variance; and

(ii) Impacts on highway safety, traffic movement, and the environment.

(b) By January 1st of each year after federal approval, the state department of transportation must submit a status and performance report on the implementation of the variance.

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