
Transportation Committee

ESSB 6156

Brief Description: Modifying the requirements for collector vehicle registrations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Takko, Wagoner, Saldaña, Conway and Sheldon; by request of Department of Licensing).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires collector license plates to be renewed every five years based on a phased-in schedule determined by the Department of Licensing.
- Prohibits the use of collector vehicles for business or commercial purposes or routine transportation.
- Increases the collector plate registration fee from \$35 to \$70 and allows the personalization of collector plates for a one-time fee of \$52.
- Raises the collector vehicle age threshold from 30 years to 40 years beginning with new collector vehicle registrations on or after July 1, 2026.
- Requires that a motor vehicle be manufactured or built before January 1, 1916, to be eligible for a horseless carriage license plate.

Hearing Date: 2/29/20

Staff: Christine Thomas (786-7142).

Background:

A registered owner may apply to the Department of Licensing (DOL) for a collector vehicle license plate for a motor vehicle or travel trailer that is at least 30 years old. The motor vehicle must be operated primarily as a collector vehicle and be in good running order. The owner may receive a collector plate that is assigned by the DOL or the owner can provide an actual Washington-issued license plate designated for general use in the year of the vehicle's manufacture. The original registration fee ranges from \$49.75 to \$55.75 depending on the type of vehicle. Of the fee amounts, \$35 is for the collector plate fee. The plates are valid for the life

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.

of the vehicle, are not required to be renewed, may be transferred from one vehicle to another vehicle if the plate was provided by the owner, and must be displayed on the rear of the motor vehicle. Approximately 275,000 collector vehicles are registered in Washington, which is approximately 3.4 percent of total registered vehicles. Approximately 11 percent of the total collector vehicles registered in the state were built or manufactured after 1980.

Within the count of collector vehicles is a subset of vehicles called "horseless carriages" that has additional requirements. A horseless carriage motor vehicle must be at least 40 years old. The original registration fee ranges from \$55.25 and \$60.25 depending on the type of vehicle. Of the fee amounts, \$35 is for the collector plate fee. The plates are valid for the life of the motor vehicle, are not required to be renewed, may not be transferred to any other motor vehicle, and must be displayed on the rear of the motor vehicle.

The Horseless Carriage Club of America defines a "horseless carriage" as any pioneer gas, steam, or electric motor vehicle built or manufactured before January 1, 1916.

All collector vehicles may be driven only for participation in club activities, to and from exhibitions, auto shows, tours, parades, for testing purposes, and occasional driving for pleasure without compensation.

Summary of Bill:

Collector vehicles may not be used for business or commercial purposes or routine transportation of persons or property, but may be used in association with operation and maintenance of the vehicle. Beginning July 1, 2026, the collector vehicle age threshold is raised from 30 years to 40 years for new registrations. Vehicles must be manufactured or built before January 1, 1916, to be eligible for a horseless carriage license plate.

Actual Washington state-issued license plates, provided by the owner to be used as a collector license plate, are restricted to vehicles manufactured and with a model year before January 1, 1989. The collector license plate registration fee is increased from \$35 to \$70. A registered owner with a collector vehicle license plate may personalize their plate for a one-time fee of \$52 in addition to the collector license plate fee.

The collector plates are required to be renewed every five years with a signed certification by the owner. A renewal of a collector vehicle registration under the five-year renewal cycle is required to pay a \$5 service fee unless the transaction is conducted on-line. If the transaction is conducted by a county auditor or a subagent, the fee is retained by them. The five-year renewal requirement will be phased in over a period of no more than six years. The first vehicles subject to the five-year renewal requirement would be vehicles closest to the 30-year threshold.

The DOL may refuse to issue or renew a collector vehicle license plate and may cancel a registration certificate if the applicant does not meet qualifications.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 2020.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2021.