
Transportation Committee

HB 1269

Brief Description: Addressing motor vehicle transporter license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Kirby, Barkis, Robertson and Chambers.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Limits the number of license plate sets for the purpose of a vehicle transporter business to no more than 10.
- Increases the fees for a vehicle transporter license and transporter license plates and indicator tabs.
- Requires the loss, theft, or damaging of transporter license plates or indicator tabs to be reported within 10 days.
- Restricts the use of transporter license plates and indicator tabs to Washington public highways and authorizes the Director of the Department of Licensing to deny, suspend, or revoke a transporter license if the holder uses transporter license plates otherwise.

Hearing Date: 2/8/21

Staff: Mark Matteson (786-7145).

Background:

A motor vehicle transporter (transporter) is a business that delivers or moves vehicles as a service to persons or other businesses or entities for a fee. The transporter may move the vehicle either by driving it from one location to another or else by towing it. Types of businesses or entities that are transporters include: auto detail shops; towers that move vehicles for persons that are members of an automobile association; car haulers; auction houses; and some tow truck

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operators. Auto repair shops are also eligible for transporter licenses for the purposes of evaluating vehicles in need of repair or that have been repaired. The function of transporters is considered distinct from that of registered tow truck operators that tow abandoned vehicles or improperly parked vehicles and from that of motor freight carriers that haul vehicles on trailers or semitrailers.

State law requires that a transporter business procure a special business license known as a transporter license. To apply for the license, the person representing the business must submit an application to the Department of Licensing (DOL) along with a fee of \$25. To receive special transporter license plates or, in the case of a registered tow truck operator, special indicator tabs, the applicant must submit a fee of \$2 for each set of plates or indicator tabs; there is no limit to the number of plate sets or indicator tabs that may be requested. If the application is in order, the DOL must issue a certificate of license along with any plate sets or indicator tabs requested. The plates or indicator tabs must be attached to and conspicuously displayed on all vehicles being delivered in the conduct of business. The plates or indicator tabs provide the holder of the license the authority to drive or tow any motor vehicle upon the public roads of the state.

A transporter license may be renewed annually for a fee of \$15.

The Director of the DOL may deny, suspend, or revoke the license of a transporter if the licensee: uses the transporter plates or indicator tabs on a vehicle owned by the transporter business; loans the transporter plates or indicator tabs to another entity or person; uses the plates or indicator tabs for a purpose other than delivering or moving vehicles as a service to others; is knowingly in possession of a stolen vehicle or a vehicle with an altered or missing vehicle identification number; or otherwise violates the provisions of the chapter of law regulating transporters.

Violation of any provision of the laws governing transporters is a traffic infraction.

Summary of Bill:

The number of license plate sets for the purpose of a vehicle transporter business is limited to three, unless the business demonstrates a sufficient business need, in which case the limit is 10. The authority to use such plates or an indicator tab is restricted to Washington public highways only. The fee for an original transporter's license is increased from \$25 to \$150 and the renewal fee is increased to \$100. The fee for a set of plates or an indicator tab is increased from \$2 to \$50. The holder of a transporter license is required to report the loss, theft, or damaging of a transporter license plate or indicator tab to the DOL within 10 days of the event of loss, theft, or damage. The DOL Director is given the authority to deny, suspend, or revoke a transporter license if the holder uses transporter license plates on public highways outside Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2022.