

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5354

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 11, 2021

Title: An act relating to traffic control in large cities.

Brief Description: Addressing traffic control in large cities.

Sponsors: Senators Saldaña, King and Nguyen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/01/21, 2/11/21 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes a single flagger, in large cities, to control traffic from the center of an intersection without the presence of a police officer, if part of an approved traffic control plan.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hobbs, Chair; Saldaña, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Cleveland, Das, Hawkins, Lovelett, Nguyen, Nobles, Padden, Randall, Sheldon, Wilson, C. and Wilson, J.

Staff: Kimberly Johnson (786-7472)

Background: Large public events often require event organizers to apply for certain permits related to public safety, traffic issues often being part of the permitting and planning process.

Under current law, all motor vehicle drivers and pedestrians must obey traffic control signals, unless directed otherwise by a police or traffic officer. There is also an

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administrative rule that prohibits a single flagger directing traffic in the center of an intersection, except when there is an emergency or when law enforcement is flagging.

Summary of Bill: In cities with a population of 700,000 or greater, a single flagger may direct traffic from the center of an intersection without a police or traffic officer present, if part of a traffic control plan approved by the city.

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: This is a small bill to try to assist our arts organizations, professional sports teams, and other large event holders in Seattle. The city has recently made a decision to move some activities out of the police department, including some traffic management activities and this change has led to a request to allow a flagger to control traffic under certain circumstances.

Why the Mariners are interested in this bill is because the current statute limits our ability to manage and mitigate traffic around our events. We have had a contract with the Seattle Police Department for 27 years. This year the city has made a decision to move traffic management out of the police department to a civilian agency. We have always paid for the work the police officers have performed and we will continue to pay the appropriate compensation to the civilian agency. This is a specific fix for a specific problem within the city of Seattle. Safety is paramount and will not be diminished by this bill. The Department of Labor and Industries still requires flagger certification and we have worked with WSDOT to make sure the bill will work.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Rebecca Saldaña, Prime Sponsor; Fred Rivera, Seattle Mariners; Amber Carter, Seattle Mariners.

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