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HOUSE BILL 1655

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State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

**By** Representatives Griffey, Shewmake, Barkis, Eslick, Chase, Graham, Paul, Dent, Gilday, Jacobsen, Pollet, Riccelli, Frame, Young, and Taylor

Prefiled 12/16/21. Read first time 01/10/22. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to having safety rest areas open to the public as  
2 soon as possible; adding a new section to chapter 47.38 RCW; creating  
3 a new section; and declaring an emergency.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Commercial motor vehicle parking shortages  
6 are a national safety concern. Washington state has exacerbated the  
7 problem in the fall of 2021 by the closure of many state-owned and  
8 operated safety rest areas. All vehicle drivers need safe places to  
9 stop when they are tired to prevent serious and fatal injuries.  
10 Washington's target zero plan reports that drowsy driving was a  
11 factor in 44 deaths and 236 serious injuries from 2015-2017. One of  
12 the ways Washington's target zero plan addresses this issue is having  
13 available rest areas. The closure of state-owned safety rest areas is  
14 contrary to state policy to have zero deaths on the roadways.

15 In addition, commercial truck drivers are required to take  
16 federally mandated rest breaks that leads to the need for there to be  
17 parking available in many locations throughout the highway system.  
18 Safety rest areas are important for supply line integrity and the use  
19 by the traveling public. The legislature believes it is essential for  
20 this public service to be restored and maintained in the future as  
21 quickly as possible.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 47.38  
2    RCW to read as follows:

3        The department is directed to reconfigure its maintenance  
4    operations to assure that its owned and operated safety rest areas  
5    are open for use except for seasonal closures or cleaning,  
6    maintenance, and repairs. The change in structure may take advantage  
7    of the gig economy and restructure existing vacant employee positions  
8    to be more in line with current needs. The department may issue  
9    short-term contracts to provide cleaning, security, or repairs to the  
10   safety rest areas when the department is unable to provide such  
11   services using existing employees.

12       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    This act is necessary for the immediate  
13   preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of  
14   the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes  
15   effect immediately.

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