

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5812

As of January 18, 2024

Title: An act relating to responding to electric vehicle fires.

Brief Description: Concerning the response to electric vehicle fires.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, J., Nguyen, Lovick and McCune.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/18/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Washington State Patrol to conduct a study of electric vehicle fires with a reporting date of January 1, 2025.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: In 2021, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) completed an investigation of three electric vehicle crashes resulting in post-crash fires and one non-crash fire involving an electric vehicle. The NTSB also examined national and international standards established to maximize the safety of electric vehicles. The NTSB also reviewed emergency guidance documents supplied by vehicle manufacturers to mitigate the safety risks to first and second responders who deal with electric vehicle crashes and high-voltage lithium-ion battery fires.

The NTSB report identifies the following safety issues:

- inadequacy of vehicle manufacturers' emergency response guides for minimizing the risks to first and second responders posed by high-voltage lithium-ion battery fires in electric vehicles; and
- gaps in safety standards and research related to high-voltage lithium-ion batteries

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involved in high-speed, high-severity crashes.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): The Washington State Patrol (WSP), in consultation with the Department of Ecology, a representative of the towing and recovery industry, and local fire protection districts, must conduct a study of electric vehicle fires reviewing the following:

- impacts to the environment and proximate residential areas and health impacts to responding firefighters;
- best practices for fire response; and
- best practices regarding cleanup and disposal efforts.

By January 1, 2025, WSP must report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature their study findings and any resulting recommendations.

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.