

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5812

C 189 L 24
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the response to electric vehicle fires.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, J., Nguyen, Lovick and McCune).

Senate Committee on Transportation
House Committee on Transportation

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 involved in high-speed, high-severity crashes.

Summary: 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.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

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

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 49 0

House 96 0

Effective: June 6, 2024