

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1113

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, March 31, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to traffic control signal preemption devices.

**Brief Description:** Regulating traffic signal preemption devices.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Criminal Justice & Corrections (originally sponsored by Representatives Wallace, Jarrett, Fromhold, Armstrong, Moeller, Lovick, Morrell, Kilmer, Dickerson, Appleton, Wood, Ormsby, Sells and Chase).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/11/05, 98-0.

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 3/31/05 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Jacobsen, Vice Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Eide, Esser, Kastama, Mulliken, Oke, Spanel and Weinstein.

**Staff:** Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

**Background:** Under current law, optical strobe light devices are devices that emit optical signals at specific frequencies to traffic control lights in order to alter the cycle of the lights. The devices may only be installed or used on the following classes of vehicles: (1) law enforcement or emergency vehicles, to obtain the right of way at intersections; (2) Department of Transportation, city, or county maintenance vehicles, to perform maintenance tests; or (3) public transit vehicles, to accelerate the cycle of the lights. The Washington State Patrol must adopt rules implementing these provisions. A violation of these provisions is a traffic infraction.

Additionally, current law prohibits persons from unlawfully altering traffic control signals or devices. A violation of these provisions is, at a maximum, a misdemeanor.

**Summary of Bill:** "Optical strobe light devices" is replaced in the law with "signal preemption device" to mean a device capable of altering the normal operation of a traffic control signal. Signal preemption devices may only be installed or used on or with the following classes of vehicles: (1) law enforcement or emergency vehicles; (2) Department of Transportation, city, or county maintenance vehicles; or (3) public transit vehicles.

It is a criminal offense to unlawfully possess, use, sell, or purchase signal preemption devices, resulting in the following penalties: (1) possessing a signal preemption device is a misdemeanor; (2) using, selling, or purchasing a signal preemption device is a gross misdemeanor; (3) using a signal preemption device is a class C felony, if causing a traffic

accident, a Level 3 class B felony, if causing substantial bodily harm, or a Level 7 class B felony, if causing death.

The criminal penalties do not apply to the following personnel in the course of their duties: (1) law enforcement, fire prevention, and emergency medical personnel; (2) maintenance personnel; (3) public transit personnel; (4) delivery personnel when delivering a signal preemption device; and (5) signal preemption device manufacturers or retailers when providing the device to specified personnel.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** None.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** No one.