

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1136

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to volunteer firefighter special license plates.

Brief Description: Creating volunteer firefighter special license plates.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Eddy, Armstrong, Morris, Kristiansen, Chandler, Pearson and Kenney).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/2/11, 2/8/11 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/22/11, 94-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/9/11, 46-2.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the volunteer firefighter special license plate.
- Specifies requirements for eligibility to receive a volunteer firefighter special license plate.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Billig, Vice Chair; Liias, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Asay, Eddy, Finn, Fitzgibbon, Jinkins, Johnson, Ladenburg, McCune, Moeller, Moscoso, Overstreet, Reykdal, Rivers, Rodne, Rolfes, Ryu, Shea, Takko, Upthegrove and Zeiger.

Staff: Debbie Driver (786-7143).

Background:

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

The Department of Licensing (DOL) issues special vehicle license plates that may be used in lieu of standard plates. A governmental or nonprofit sponsoring organization seeking to sponsor a special plate either submits an application to the DOL or requests legislation to create the special plate. Generally, the sponsoring organization seeking to sponsor the special plate is required to reimburse the DOL for the costs of establishing the new special plate.

For special license plates that are enacted by the Legislature, a sponsoring organization must, within 30 days of enactment, submit prepayment of all start-up costs to the DOL. If the sponsoring organization is not able to meet the prepayment requirement, revenues generated from the sale of the special license plate are first used to pay off any costs associated with establishing the new plate. The sponsoring organization must also provide a proposed license plate design to the DOL. Additionally, the sponsoring organization must submit an annual financial report to the DOL detailing actual revenues generated from the sale of the special license plate.

There is a moratorium on the issuance of new special license plates until June 30, 2011.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The bill creates the volunteer firefighter special license plate, which would depict a symbol, description, or artwork that recognizes volunteer firefighters. In addition to all fees and taxes required to be paid upon application for a vehicle registration, a fee of \$28 would be charged for a volunteer firefighter special license plate and a \$2 renewal fee would be charged for renewal of a volunteer firefighter special license plate. The DOL shall apply all fees collected from the volunteer firefighters special license plate towards administration and collection expenses incurred by the DOL.

An applicant for the initial volunteer firefighter special license plate must be a volunteer firefighter for at least one year and must have documentation of service from the appropriate fire service district. The volunteer firefighter special license plate must be surrendered if the volunteer firefighter leaves firefighting between two and 10 years after the plate is issued. If the volunteer firefighter stays in service for at least 10 years and then leaves, the license plate will be retained by the former volunteer firefighter, and the person will continue to pay the future registration renewals. A qualifying firefighter may have no more than one set of plates per vehicle for each of their vehicles and, if the volunteer firefighter is convicted of a felony, the license plate must be surrendered upon conviction.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

The Senate amendment changes the fee for a volunteer firefighter special license plate from \$28.00 to \$40.00 and the renewal fee from \$2.00 to \$30.00 and clarifies the duration of time a volunteer firefighter must serve as a volunteer firefighter in order to retain the volunteer firefighter special license plates. The Senate amendment also exempts the volunteer firefighter special license plate from the moratorium on special license plates. The Senate amendment requires the DOL to report to certain findings regarding the implementation of the special license plates to the joint transportation committee and added an effective date of January 1, 2012.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The volunteer firefighter special license plate is one way Washington can honor and appreciate the many volunteers who work to protect the state from fire disasters. These volunteers provide many hours of service and are motivated by their love of Washington. The volunteer firefighter license plate would provide a visual aid for identification purposes, and when combined with the existing professional firefighter plate would recognize all the firefighters in the state. Volunteer firefighters deserve recognition and this bill provides a mechanism for that recognition to occur.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Eddy, prime sponsor; T. J. Nedrow, Washington State Firefighters Association; Joel Moak, West Thurston Regional Fire Authority; and Ralph Rogers, Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (In support) Ryan Spiller, Washington Fire Commissioners.