

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2280

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to establishing a yellow dot program for motor vehicles.

Brief Description: Establishing a yellow dot program for motor vehicles.

Sponsors: Representatives Moeller, Pettigrew, Blake, Clibborn, Armstrong, Goodman, Hasegawa, Fitzgibbon, Carlyle, Orcutt, Maxwell, Dickerson, Pollet, Tharinger and Pearson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/16/12, 2/1/12 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Licensing (DOL) to implement a voluntary Yellow Dot Program and provide the Yellow Dot window decal and folder to any person who applies.
- Directs the DOL to charge a fee that is sufficient to cover the costs associated with the Yellow Dot Program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 23 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Billig, Vice Chair; Liias, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Asay, Eddy, Finn, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Jinkins, Johnson, Klippert, Ladenburg, McCune, Moeller, Morris, Moscoso, Reykdal, Rivers, Ryu, Takko, Upthegrove and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Kristiansen, Overstreet, Rodne and Shea.

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306).

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 Yellow Dot Program began in 2002 in Connecticut. In 2009 it was introduced in Etowah County of Alabama and later was expanded statewide. In addition to Alabama and Connecticut, there are Yellow Dot programs in New York, Massachusetts, Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Virginia, and Illinois. The Yellow Dot Program places a decal on the vehicle's rear window on the driver's side in the lower corner. Emergency first responders (emergency medical responders and law enforcement personnel) are alerted to look for this decal. The decal indicates to the first responders that there is a folder in the glove compartment of the vehicle that contains the participant's name, photo of the participant (in case more than one person is in the vehicle), medical conditions, and emergency contacts.

The Yellow Dot Program was originated to assist an individual following a motor vehicle accident when the person might not be able to communicate for themselves. The purpose of the information in the folder is to assist emergency first responders in identifying the person, communicating with the person's emergency contacts, and ensuring that the person's medications and preexisting medical conditions are considered when treatment is administered related to the motor vehicle accident.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Licensing (DOL) is directed to initiate a voluntary program in which interested individuals may obtain a Yellow Dot window decal from the DOL for placement on their motor vehicle and a Yellow Dot folder for placement in the glove compartment of the motor vehicle. The purpose of the information in the folder is to assist emergency medical responders and law enforcement personnel. The folder should contain a current information form with the participant's name, a photo of the participant, emergency contact information, medical conditions, recent surgeries, allergies, medications used, and participant's physician.

The DOL must charge a fee for the issuance of the Yellow Dot window decal and the Yellow Dot folder. The fee must be sufficient to cover the costs associated with the program.

Participation in the Yellow Dot Program does not create any new or distinct obligation for emergency medical responders or law enforcement personnel to determine if there is a Yellow Dot folder in the motor vehicle or use the information contained in the Yellow Dot folder.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect January 1, 2013.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The yellow decal is located on the rear window on the driver's side in the lower corner. The program is totally voluntary and the participation in the Yellow Dot Program does not create any new or distinct obligations for emergency medical responders or law enforcement personnel. The information will be available and, depending on the circumstances, can be invaluable to the first responders. It can also help identify persons with special needs along with providing as much information on the person as possible to assist emergency and law enforcement personnel. This is a quality-of-life issue and first responders are looking to save lives.

Supporters would like to see this type of information on a person's driver license, but this is a good start. Education will be critical to this program. Presently there are also alert bracelets and necklaces that some people wear. Sometimes health reasons are not obvious or the person may not be conscious when the first responders arrive.

(Information only) To reduce the DOL fiscal note, the agency will create the portal on their website and work with private industry to have a third party actually send out the Yellow Dot decals and folders. The Washington State Patrol has worked with the bill sponsor to take care of their concerns from earlier bills in previous sessions. There will be circumstances where, in an accident, the yellow dot may not be seen due to a vehicle missing the back window, the vehicle flipped over, or the vehicle may be submerged in water.

There is no cost to the public since the fees that are charged cover the costs of the program. It is important that the information is kept up to date and persons need to be careful not to include a lot of personal information due to possible identity theft.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Moeller, prime sponsor; Donna Brase; TeraSue Coleman-Lintz, East Minnehaha Neighborhood Association; John Russell; and Milada Allen, Felida Neighborhood Association.

(Information only) Jason Berry, Washington State Patrol, and Tony Simoneti, Department of Licensing.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.