

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5317

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Transportation

**Title:** An act relating to the removal of vehicles by a regional transit authority when obstructing the operation of high capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizing public safety.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the removal of vehicles by a regional transit authority when obstructing the operation of high capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizing public safety.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Nobles, Wilson, J., Frame, Liias, Lovick, Saldaña, Salomon, Shewmake, Wellman and Wilson, C.).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Transportation: 3/9/23, 3/16/23 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**  
**(As Amended By Committee)**

- Allows Regional Transit Authority (RTA) representatives to direct an immediate tow of unauthorized vehicles within an RTA right-of-way.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Timmons, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Hutchins, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Low, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Robertson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berry, Bronoske, Chapman, Cortes, Dent, Doglio, Duerr, Entenman, Goehner, Griffey, Hackney, Klicker, Mena, Orcutt, Ramel, Ramos, Schmidt, Taylor, Volz, Walsh and Wylie.

**Staff:** Michael Hirsch (786-7195).

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*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.*

**Background:**

Unauthorized vehicles may be impounded by a registered tow truck operator (RTTO) at the direction of a law enforcement officer or other public official with jurisdiction if the vehicle is on public property, or at the direction of the property owner or an agent. A vehicle is deemed unauthorized if it is left unattended in certain public or private locations. A vehicle is immediately considered an unauthorized vehicle and subject to removal if it is:

- determined by a police officer to be an accident or traffic hazard;
- in a publicly owned or controlled parking facility with proper posted signage;
- on residential property;
- on private, nonresidential property with proper posted signage; or
- during the 2021-23 fiscal biennium within the right-of-way used by a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) for high capacity transportation where the vehicle constitutes an obstruction to the operation of high capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizes public safety.

An authorized RTA representative may direct an impound for an unauthorized vehicle in the right-of-way used by an RTA where the vehicle constitutes an obstruction to the operation of high capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizes public safety.

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**Summary of Amended Bill:**

A vehicle is considered an unauthorized vehicle and is subject to immediate removal by an RTTO if it is left unattended within a right-of-way used by an RTA for high capacity transportation where the vehicle obstructs the operation of a high capacity transportation system vehicle or jeopardizes public safety. An authorized representative of an RTA may request an impound for this type of unauthorized vehicle.

**Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:**

The amended bill limits the definition of an unauthorized vehicle subject to immediate impoundment in instances when a vehicle in a public location constitutes an obstruction to the operation of high capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizes public safety to instances when a vehicle is within, rather than on or within 10 feet of, the right-of-way used by an RTA.

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**Appropriation:** None.**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the

session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Communities rely on transit. Delays in transit service can seriously disrupt schedules. Vehicles on right-of-way cause delays. This bill lets an RTA directly contract to remove the vehicles and removes the intermediate step of contacting the police department, which reduces the burden on law enforcement. The bill does not affect any vehicle in what could be construed as a legal parking space. Law enforcement asked for this bill. The bill continues the authority Sound Transit received last session.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator T'wina Nobles, prime sponsor; and Alex Soldano, Sound Transit.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.