

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1368

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to creating several new special license plates.

Brief Description: Creating several new special license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Orcutt, Donaghy and Klicker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/20/25, 2/27/25 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the Keep Washington Evergreen, the LeMay-America's Car Museum, the Mount St. Helens, the Nautical Northwest, the Smokey Bear, the State Sport, the Working Forests, the Seattle Reign FC, Firefighter Memorial, and the Washington State Honey Bees and Pollinators special license plates.
- Establishes both original and renewal fees for the special license plates.
- Directs proceeds from the special license plates for various purposes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Bernbaum, Vice Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Low, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Mendoza, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Schmidt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Dent, Duerr, Entenman, Griffey, Hunt, Klicker, Ley, Nance, Orcutt, Paul, Ramel, Richards, Stuebe, Taylor, Timmons, Volz, Wylie and Zahn.

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.

Staff: Sandy Myer (786-7140).

Background:

The Department of Licensing (DOL) is authorized to issue specialized vehicle license plates to be used in lieu of standard license plates. A sponsoring organization may pursue the creation of a specialized license plate either by providing an application packet to the DOL for approval prior to pursuing legislation or by having legislation passed without submitting an application.

The overall cost of implementing a new special license plate is approximately \$30,000 and must be paid back in two years by the sponsoring organization. The sponsoring organization is required to pay a start-up cost of \$6,300 at the time of application that is credited against the overall cost of implementation. Once the total cost is recouped, the proceeds of the plate sales will be distributed to the sponsoring organization.

The DOL charges a fee of \$40 for the original issuance of a set of special license plates, and a \$30 fee is charged for the renewal of the set of plates. The DOL is allowed to retain \$12 of the amount paid for special license plate issuance and \$2 from the amount paid to renew the plates for administrative expenses.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The bill creates multiple special license plates and identifies the receipt and condition of the funds as follows:

- Keep Washington Evergreen special license plate with funds being used to support electric charging stations throughout Washington;
- LeMay-America's Car Museum special license plate with funds being distributed to the LeMay-America's Car Museum to be used to promote, encourage, and inspire students and the community to understand the role of automobiles in the culture and economy;
- Mount St. Helens special license plate with funds being distributed to the Mount St. Helens Institute to be used to promote education, stewardship, and science at Mount St. Helens;
- Nautical Northwest special license plate with funds being distributed to support historic resources of Whidbey Island's maritime communities;
- Smokey Bear special license plate with funds being distributed to the Department of Natural Resources to use for wildfire prevention programs;
- State Sport special license plate with funds being distributed to a trust account managed by the Seattle Metro Pickleball Association to be used for the construction and maintenance of dedicated pickleball courts;
- Working Forests special license plate with funds being distributed to the Washington Tree Farm Program to be used to support small forest landowners;

- Seattle Reign FC special license plate with funds being distributed to the RAVE foundation to be used to inspire youth in underserved communities;
- Firefighter Memorial special license plate with funds being distributed to the Fallen Firefighter Memorial Account to be used to support the construction and maintenance of the firefighter memorial on the Capitol Campus with excess funds provided to Washington State Council of Firefighters; and
- Washington State Honey Bees and Pollinators special license plates with funds being distributed to the Washington State Beekeepers Association to be used to support research and education activities, and materials on honey bees and pollinators.

Special plates created by this act that have received 3,500 or more signatures before March 1, 2025, will be issued by November 1, 2025. Special license plates that have not met the signature requirement will have a year from the effective date of this act to obtain signatures, and will be issued after November 1, 2026.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds additional special license plates, requires the DOL to issue special license plates that have met signature requirements by November 1, 2025, and provides a year from the effective date of the bill for the sponsoring organization to satisfy the signature requirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on November 1, 2025.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Special license plates have a very important purpose to them.

A pickleball license plate celebrates Washington's state sport and its roots in the Evergreen State. This bill supports pickleball groups looking to self-fund public pickleball courts. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the United States. The Seattle Metro Pickleball Association serves a population of 4 million people in the Seattle metro area and partners with clubs and individuals beyond Seattle Metro.

The Mount St. Helens license plate will provide funds to provide youth and adult education programs and stewardship in and around the National Volcanic Monument. The work of the institute connects local people to the environment and provides supports stewardship and has impacts on the Forest Service.

The most important part of the Smokey Bear license plate is not the proceeds that will be collected, but the plate will serve as a reminder when seen to be careful with fire. In Washington 91 percent of fires are known to be human caused. It is a crucial time for the state to invest in wildfire prevention at every opportunity possible. Awareness is an important component for wildfire prevention and the Smokey Bear license plate will highlight wildfire safety as well as provide educational opportunities.

The LeMay Museum specialty plate will help fund the museum's programs aimed at inspiring students and the community to understand the role of automobiles in our culture and the economy. Funding will be provided to programs that will help inspire a new generation of skilled trade workers, engineers, designers, artists, and enthusiasts that will help us promote, encourage, and inspire students in the community.

The Working Forests license plates will help provide visibility and funding for the Washington Tree Farm Program. The program supports sustainably managed timber that is used for things like lumber for construction, pulp for paper products, even utility poles. The unified goal is to have small forest landowners sustainably manage their land in ways that promote forest health, provide habitat for wildlife, protect water resources, and provide places for recreation.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ed Orcutt, prime sponsor; Kate Van Gent, Seattle Metro Pickleball Association; Alyssa Hoyt, Mount St. Helens Institute; Cristina Gonzalez; Pat Sullivan, Department of Natural Resources; Michael Transue, LeMay - America's Car Museum; and Keith Townsend, Working Forests license plate.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.