
Transportation Committee

SB 5016

Brief Description: Concerning tracked and wheeled all-terrain vehicles.

Sponsors: Senators Warnick, Brown and Van De Wege.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Licensing to permit the owners of certain wheeled all-terrain vehicles (WATVs) to license the vehicle concurrently for use as a tracked all-terrain vehicle (TATV) and for off-road and/or on-road use.
- Requires a person who applies for a concurrent vehicle license for a WATV and TATV to submit a one-time declaration providing that, while in use upon public roads, the vehicle will conform with all federal and state motor vehicle safety standards.

Hearing Date: 3/15/21

Staff: Mark Matteson (786-7145).

Background:

Off-Road Vehicles.

A wheeled all-terrain vehicle (WATV) is a specific category of off-road vehicle (ORV) that is regulated separately from other ORVs under some aspects of a state law first enacted in 2013 that allow the vehicle to be used for on-road use, as well. There are two types of WATVs that are regulated with respect to travel on public roads. One is a motorized nonhighway vehicle with certain specifications: handlebars of 50 inches or less in width; a seat with a height of at least 20 inches; a maximum weight of 1,500 pounds; and four tires with a maximum diameter of 30 inches. The second is a utility-type vehicle (UTV) designed for and capable of travel over

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designated roads with certain specifications: four or more low-pressure tires of 20 pounds per square inch or less; a maximum width of less than 74 inches; a maximum weight of less than 2,000 pounds; and a wheelbase of 110 inches or less. The latter category of WATV must satisfy one of three additional specifications: a minimum width of 50 inches; a minimum weight of 900 pounds; or a wheelbase of over 61 inches.

An owner of a WATV that wishes to operate the vehicle in the state must first register the vehicle with the Department of Licensing (DOL). Along with any applicable taxes, the owner must pay a fee of \$12 for off-road travel. If the vehicle is to be used for on-road travel, the vehicle must also satisfy certain equipment requirements, covering headlights, stop lamps, reflectors, and other items. The owner must then have the vehicle inspected by a licensed repair shop and have a declaration signed that certifies the vehicle is properly equipped. To receive on-road registration, the owner must submit the declaration and pay \$18 for on-road travel. Following the registration process, the DOL will issue a metal tag to the owner of the WATV. The metal tag serves the same function as a license plate for on-road vehicles within Washington and, for states that have reciprocal laws governing out-of-state ORVs, allows the owner to operate the vehicle in that state.

Snowmobiles.

Snowmobiles are self-propelled vehicles capable of traveling over snow and ice. A snowmobile owner must register the vehicle with the DOL before operating it and pay a \$30 fee. Upon receipt of payment, the DOL will issue the applicant a decal, which must be affixed to the right or left side of the snowmobile below the windshield. The decal serves the same function as a license plate for on-road vehicles within Washington and, for states that have reciprocal laws governing out-of-state snowmobiles, allows the owner to operate the vehicle in that state.

Dual-Use Vehicles.

State law provides that certain vehicles that are designed or modified for off-road or snowmobile use may be converted for the purposes of on-road travel. Off-road motorcycles, for one, may be converted for on-road travel by installing the correct equipment, having the motorcycle inspected by a licensed dealer or repair shop, and submitting a declaration to the DOL certifying that the motorcycle is properly equipped and that the equipment complies with state and federal requirements. In addition, an on-road motorcycle may be converted to a type of snowmobile called a snow bike. The owner may register the vehicle concurrently for both on-road use and snow bike use, if the owner submits a declaration providing that the equipment required for on-road use will be installed prior to on-road travel and that the vehicle conforms with all federal and state motor vehicle safety standards while used for on-road travel.

Summary of Bill:

The DOL must allow the owner of a WATV to maintain concurrent licenses for the vehicle for use as a WATV, either off-road, on-road, or both, and for use as a tracked all-terrain vehicle (TATV), provided that certain requirements are met. A "tracked all-terrain vehicle" is defined as a WATV that weighs less than 2,000 pounds in stock configuration and that has tracks or a

combination of tracks and skis installed in place of the standard low-pressure tires.

Regarding the concurrent registration process, the terms of registration are the same as those for WATVs, including applicable fees, when the vehicle is registered as either an off-road or on-road WATV, or both. When the vehicle is registered as a TATV, the terms of registration are those that apply to snowmobiles, including applicable fees. When registering for a concurrent license for the first time, the owner must submit a declaration established by the DOL that includes a statement signed by the owner that, for any WATV that had been previously converted to a TATV, the vehicle must conform with all federal and state motor vehicle safety standards while in use as a WATV upon public roads.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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