

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: 06/06/2012
POSITION: Neutral

BILL NUMBER: AB 2659
AUTHOR: Blumenfield, Bob

BILL SUMMARY: Commercial driver's licenses for military personnel

This bill would permit the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to waive the driving skills test required to obtain a commercial driver's license (CDL) for a person with a US Armed Forces military driver's license in compliance with federal regulations.

FISCAL SUMMARY

The DMV estimates costs of would be minor and absorbable for one-time programming to allow a code for waiver of the drive test and to develop a regulatory package that clarify requirements for the test waiver.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance is neutral on this bill because it will simplify the process for veterans with the required qualifications to obtain a commercial drivers license. Federal law allows for waiver of the drive test, so the bill would not cause California to be out of compliance with preemptive federal requirements. Because the exemption is limited to individuals with recent military commercial vehicle experience, it maintains safety standards for commercial vehicles in California.

Existing law requires a person to have a valid commercial CDL in order to operate a commercial vehicle in the state. The DMV issues a CDL to an applicant only after he or she passes written and driving skills tests.

Federal regulations prescribe specific skills and knowledge a person must demonstrate before he or she is eligible for a CDL. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the federal agency responsible for commercial vehicle oversight, recently amended its regulations to allow states to waive this skills test for an applicant possessing a military commercial vehicle license that has held the federal license within the last two years and has not had a suspended or revoked license, a major driving offense, more than one traffic violation, or any at-fault accidents.

This bill would permit the DMV to waive the driving skills test required to obtain a commercial driver's license for a person with a US Armed Forces military driver's license in compliance with federal regulations.

Discussion: According to the author's office, recent veterans represent a disproportionate number of the country's unemployed population. Further, research suggests that many of these recent veterans were military transport operators, and therefore share skills similar to commercial drivers. At the same time, the author's office contends, the transport industry reports a shortage of truck drivers. This bill attempts to address these two problems by permitting the DMV to adopt the federal waiver standards for the CDL skills test. According to the author's office, 15 other states have adopted the federal standards, including New York, Florida, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. With a high veteran unemployment rate and a labor shortage in the trucking industry, the author's office believes this bill benefits the state by allowing qualified veterans to obtain a commercial driver's license in a timely and safe manner.

Analyst/Principal (0744) K.Amann	Date	Program Budget Manager Kristin Shelton	Date
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Department Deputy Director	Date
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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____
			Position Disapproved _____

BILL ANALYSIS--(CONTINUED)

AUTHOR

AMENDMENT DATE

BILL NUMBER

Blumenfield, Bob

06/06/2012

AB 2659

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)					Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)					
	CO	PROP					
	RV	98	FC	2012-2013 FC	2013-2014 FC	2014-2015	Code
2740/DMV	SO	No		-----	See Fiscal Summary	-----	0044
<u>Fund Code</u> 0044	<u>Title</u>	Motor Vehicle Account, STF					