RCW 46.96.010 Legislative findings. The legislature finds and declares that the distribution and sale of motor vehicles in this state vitally affect the general economy of the state and the public interest and public welfare, that provision for warranty service to motor vehicles is of substantial concern to the people of this state, that the maintenance of fair competition among dealers and others is in the public interest, and that the maintenance of strong and sound dealerships is essential to provide continuing and necessary reliable services to the consuming public in this state and to provide stable employment to the citizens of this state. The legislature further finds that there is a substantial disparity in bargaining power between automobile manufacturers and dealers, and that in order to promote the public interest and the public welfare, and in the exercise of its police power, it is necessary to regulate the relationship between motor vehicle dealers and motor vehicle manufacturers, importers, distributors, and their representatives doing business in this state, not only for the protection of dealers but also for the protection of consumers in assuring the continued availability and servicing of automobiles sold to the public.

The legislature recognizes it is in the best interest for manufacturers and dealers of motor vehicles to conduct business with each other in a fair, efficient, and competitive manner. The legislature declares the public interest is best served by dealers being assured of the ability to manage their business enterprises under a contractual obligation with manufacturers where dealers do not experience unreasonable interference and are assured of the ability to transfer ownership of their business without undue constraints. If the legislature authorizes a manufacturer to own or operate a motor vehicle dealership, the legislature intends that such authorization be applied narrowly to prevent erosion of the motor vehicle dealer franchise system and the benefits it provides to communities around the state. It is the intent of the legislature to impose a regulatory scheme and to regulate competition in the motor vehicle industry to the extent necessary to balance fairness and efficiency. These actions will protect consumers, strengthen enforcement, and permit motor vehicle dealers to better serve the public. [2026 c 186 s 1; 1989 c 415 s 1.]