
Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986
TDD: (517) 373-0543

House Bill 5337 (Substitute H-2 as passed by the House)
Sponsor: Representative Judson Gilbert
House Committee: Transportation
Senate Committee: Transportation and Tourism

Date Completed: 2-19-02

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code's provisions on vehicle wheel and axle loads to do the following:

- Revise the weight restrictions on designated highways for a combination of truck tractor and semitrailer.**
- Create a separate weight restriction for combinations hauling agricultural products between the National Truck Network or designated highways and other highways, until 2007.**
- Delete the April 1, 2002, sunset date on provisions that exempt agricultural commodity haulers from seasonal weight restrictions on State and county roads.**
- Extend the exemption from seasonal weight restrictions to public utility vehicles.**

The Code sets maximum weights for vehicle combinations (e.g., trucks hauling freight), but allows the State Transportation Department and local authorities to designate certain highways, or sections of highways, for heavier loading. Currently, when the maximum gross weight of a combination of vehicles with load does not exceed 73,280 pounds, two axle assemblies must be permitted on the designated highways at a gross permissible weight of 16,000 pounds per axle, if there is no other axle within nine feet of any axle of the assembly. The bill would delete reference to that weight limit, and would refer instead to a combination of truck tractor and semitrailer having up to five axles.

The bill also provides that, notwithstanding this limitation, on a combination of truck tractor and semitrailer having up to five axles, two consecutive sets of tandem axles could carry a gross permissible weight of up to 17,000 pounds on any axle of the tandem axles if there were no other axle within nine feet of any axle of the tandem axles, and if the first and last axles of the consecutive sets of tandem axles were at least 36 feet apart, and the gross vehicle weight did not exceed 80,000 pounds, to pick up and deliver agricultural commodities between the National Truck Network or special designated highways and any other highway. This provision would not apply when seasonal weight restrictions were in effect. In addition, this provision would not apply after December 31, 2006.

The Code requires a reduction in maximum axle loads during March, April, and May, but exempts agricultural products haulers from this requirement until April 1, 2002. The bill also would exempt public utility vehicles and delete the expiration date. Currently, agricultural products haulers are exempted from the seasonal weight restrictions only if they notify the county road commission at least 48 hours before the pick-up or delivery. The county road commission must issue a permit specifying the designated route of travel for the load, the date

and time period for the pick-up or delivery, a maximum speed level of travel, and any other specific conditions. The bill would include public utility vehicles in these provisions.

MCL 257.722

Legislative Analyst: Nobuko Nagata

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government, although allowing heavier trucks could add to the maintenance costs of roads and bridges. The extent of these additional costs, if any, is indeterminate.

Fiscal Analyst: Craig Thiel