

Legislative Analysis



EXEMPT MAPLE SAP TRANSPORT FROM SEASONAL WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4418 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Lee Chatfield
Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure
Complete to 1-25-16

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

The bill would add *maple sap* to the list of agricultural commodities in the section of the Michigan Vehicle Code that grants an exception to seasonal vehicle weight limits for vehicles transporting agricultural commodities.

The Vehicle Code establishes various vehicle weight limits (e.g., maximum axle loads, maximum wheel loads, and gross vehicle weights) for vehicles driven on Michigan roads. Under Section 722 of the Code — sometimes referred to as Michigan's "frost law" — maximum allowable axle loads and wheel loads are reduced as specified during the months of March, April, and May, when the spring freeze-and-thaw cycle makes roads more susceptible to damage from heavy vehicles. For example, axle loads are reduced by 25 percent on concrete paved roads (or those with concrete bases) and 35 percent for all other types of roads. (The Department of Transportation and local road commissions are authorized to modify the specified period or suspend seasonal restrictions for roads under their jurisdiction and must post information about when and where seasonal restrictions are in effect on their websites.)

However, the code contains exceptions to the seasonal weight restrictions, including one for vehicles hauling agricultural commodities. This term applies to plants and animals useful to human beings produced by agriculture (some of which are listed in the act), as well as farming equipment and fuel. As noted above, House Bill 4418 would add *maple sap* to the list of agricultural commodities.

MCL 257.722

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no apparent direct fiscal impact on state or local government.

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