

Legislative Analysis



SEASONAL WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4695 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Jason M. Sheppard
Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure
Complete to 2-22-16

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

SUMMARY:

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to add vehicles transporting potable water to the vehicles granted an exception to seasonal vehicle weight limits. Exempt vehicle currently include those transporting agricultural commodities and propane fuel, and public utility vehicles.

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.)

The code contains exceptions to the seasonal weight restrictions, including for vehicles hauling agricultural commodities and propane fuel and for public utility vehicles. The bill would add vehicles transporting potable water to the list. The term "potable water" would be defined to mean that terms as defined in the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act: "water that at the point of use is acceptable for human consumption."

MCL 257.722

FISCAL IMPACT:

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

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