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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 396 (Substitute S-6 as reported by the Committee of the Whole)  
Sponsor: Senator Tom Casperson  
Committee: Transportation

### **CONTENT**

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to do the following:

- Specify that a log rack mounted on a straight truck that extended not more than six inches beyond the total outside body width of certain vehicles would not violate a provision prohibiting certain vehicles from having a total outside body that exceeds 102 inches.
- Allow a person to operate a pneumatic tired forestry vehicle or special mobile equipment with pneumatic tires that was used in silvicultural operations for a distance of no more than 20 miles on a public highway that was under the jurisdiction of a county road commission if that vehicle were equipped with a slow-moving vehicle emblem and a flashing, rotating, or oscillating amber light, and if the vehicle or equipment were unladen.
- Specify that seasonal weight reductions would apply to a paved highway.
- Require a person operating a pneumatic tired forestry vehicle or special mobile equipment with pneumatic tires that was used in silvicultural operations for a distance of more than 20 miles on a public highway that was under the jurisdiction of a county road commission to provide notice to the commission, and prescribe a civil infraction and additional penalties for noncompliance.
- Specify that a county road commission would be held harmless for a collision between a pneumatic tired forestry vehicle or special mobile equipment with pneumatic tires that was used in silvicultural operations and another registered vehicle while operating on a public highway of the State or within the right-of-way of a public highway in Michigan.
- Extend existing provisions regarding the designation of certain highways for heavier loading by certain authorities and specific axle assembly operating limitations to a vehicle transporting forest products or special mobile equipment used in silvicultural operations on a paved or unpaved public highway in Michigan.
- Create an exception to the seasonal load restrictions for a vehicle transporting forest products or special mobile equipment used in silvicultural operations on an unpaved road if the owner of the vehicle or equipment obtained a bond, cash deposit, or irrevocable letter of credit for each mile of unpaved road under the jurisdiction of a county road commission or other local authority.

MCL 257.717 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Drew Krogulecki

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would not have a fiscal impact on the Department of Transportation.

The bill would have an indefinite impact on counties with gravel roads used by the forestry industry. If forestry vehicles operating on gravel roads were exempt from the seasonal weight restrictions, rural counties with an active forestry industry could see accelerated wear on those roads. Depending upon the severity of that erosion, repair costs for counties could range

from a few thousand dollars to tens of thousands of dollars. It is also likely that the counties would be unable to plan for these additional costs. Although the bill includes language that would allow county road commissions to require a \$2,000 bond per mile traveled by unrestricted forestry vehicles, the bill does not include language outlining the consequences for nonpayment of this bond.

The bill also would exempt width, height, weight, and combination restrictions for certain vehicles transporting forest products on county roads. The bill would hold the owner of a forestry vehicle that did damage to a road responsible for that damage. This would reduce the liability of county road commissions for the accelerated wear on roads due to the exemption.

Date Completed: 12-3-18

Fiscal Analyst: Michael Siracuse