



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 396 (Substitute S-5 as reported)
Sponsor: Senator Tom Casperson
Committee: Transportation

CONTENT

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

- Specify that a provision limiting the total outside width of a vehicle or the load to 96 inches would not apply to a vehicle transporting forest products while traveling on a county road.
- Specify that the Code's provisions pertaining to height restrictions and normal weight restrictions for certain vehicles would not apply to a vehicle transporting forest products while traveling on a county road.
- Allow a person to operate a pneumatic tired forestry vehicle or a forestry harvest vehicle for a distance of no more than 20 miles on a highway if that vehicle were equipped with a slow-moving vehicle emblem and a flashing strobe light, and if the vehicle were unladen.
- Exempt a person hauling forestry equipment from seasonal reductions to the loading maximums and gross vehicle weight requirement of the Code if the person who picked up or delivered the forestry equipment notified the county road commission for roads under its authority not less than 48 hours before the pickup or delivery of the pickup or delivery.
- Require the Michigan Department of Transportation and each local authority with highways and streets under its jurisdiction to which seasonal restrictions apply to post certain information on all roads subject to the seasonal road restrictions that intersected roads that were not subject to seasonal road restrictions on its website no later than 48 hours before the date the seasonal restrictions began.
- Create an exception to the seasonal load restrictions for a vehicle transporting forest products or forest or forest harvestry equipment on an unpaved road, and allow a county road commission to require such a vehicle to obtain a bond based on miles traveled.
- Allow a jurisdictional authority to issue a special permit authorizing the highway operation of a vehicle that was delivering new or used machinery as part of a sale of that machinery, and charge a special permit fee that does not exceed \$25.

MCL 257.717 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Drew Krogulecki

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill could have a minor negative financial 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 vehicles transporting forest products on county roads. The bill also would exempt an oversized vehicle's owner from liability if such a vehicle were transporting forest products on a county road and it collided with and damaged a lawfully-established bridge or viaduct. The costs for bridge or viaduct repair for damage caused by such a vehicle likely would be covered by the county in which the bridge or viaduct was located.

Lastly, the bill would require the State and local jurisdictions to post signs on roads subject to seasonal restrictions at least 48 hours before those restrictions went into effect. Currently, those notices are required only to be posted online. Signage costs for the Department can vary. For example, as of 2014, speed limit sign replacement costs were \$730 per mile on freeways and \$63 per mile on nonfreeways. The proposed requirements relate to the placement of signage of seasonal load restrictions, not speed limit signage. It is not known how much new signage placement the bill would require for the Department or local units of government.

Date Completed: 9-13-18

Fiscal Analyst: Michael Siracuse