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

SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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

Senate Bill 816 (as introduced 12-2-97)
Sponsor: Senator Leon Stille
Committee: Agriculture and Forestry

Date Completed: 12-8-97

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to increase the scope of the weight restriction on designated highways or interstate highways for the transportation of agricultural products, and to allow exemptions for agricultural products haulers (rather than just milk haulers) from seasonal weight restrictions on State and county roads.

Currently, the Code limits the amount of weight that may be transported by trucks over Michigan roadways, based on the distance between the axles. The loading maximum applies to interstate highways, and the State Department of Transportation, for roads under its jurisdiction, may designate a highway, or a section of it, for the operation of vehicles having a gross vehicle weight of up to 80,000 pounds that are subject to certain load maximums. The bill specifies, however, that the loading maximums and gross vehicle weight requirements would apply for a distance of up to 10 miles from a designated highway or interstate highway for the purpose of pickup or delivery of an agricultural commodity.

The bill also would require the State Department of Transportation, for roads under its jurisdiction, and a county road commission, for roads under its jurisdiction, to grant exemptions from seasonal weight restrictions only for the hauling of agricultural commodities on specified routes when requested in writing. Currently, the Code permits the Department and county road commissions to exempt milk hauling.

Under the Code, upon receiving a written application and for a good cause shown, the Transportation Department and county road commissions may grant an exemption from seasonal weight restrictions for milk on specified routes. Approval or denial of a request must be given by written notice to the applicant within 30 days after the application is submitted. If a request is denied, the written notice must state the reason for denial and alternative routes for which a permit may be issued. The applicant has the right to appeal to the State Transportation Commission or the county road commission. The exemptions do not apply on county roads in counties that negotiated agreements with milk haulers, or haulers of other commodities, during periods of seasonal load limits. The Code does not limit the counties' ability to continue to negotiate these agreements. The bill would delete these provisions.

The bill would define "agricultural commodities" to mean "farm products" as defined in Section 2 of the Michigan Right to Farm Act (MCL 286.472), i.e., "those plants and animals useful to human beings produced by agriculture", including forages and sod crops, grains and feed crops, field crops, dairy and dairy products, poultry and poultry products, cervidae (e.g., deer), livestock, equine, fish, vegetables, flowers, seeds, grasses, nursery stock, trees and tree products, mushrooms, "and other similar products, or any product which incorporates the use of food, feed, fiber, or fur, as determined

by the Michigan commission of agriculture”.

MCL 257.722

Legislative Analyst: N. Nagata

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: P. Alderfer

S9798\S816SA

This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.