

Legislative Analysis



NATURAL GAS VEHICLES WEIGHT LIMIT

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

Senate Bill 159 (passed by the Senate as S-1)

Sponsor: Sen. Tom Casperson

House Committee: Transportation

Senate Committee: Transportation

Complete to 5-22-17

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

(Enrolled Version)

SUMMARY:

The bill would amend Section 722 of the Michigan Vehicle Code to allow a vehicle with a gross weight of 80,000 pounds or less and operated by an engine fueled by compressed or liquefied natural gas to exceed certain axle loading maximums and weight load maximums but not by more than 2,000 pounds.

Specifically, such a vehicle could exceed the maximums by an amount equal to the difference between the weight of the vehicle attributable to the natural gas tank and fueling system carried by that vehicle and the weight of a comparable diesel tank and fueling system.

Section 722 of Vehicle Code (MCL 257.722) is within a chapter of the Code dealing with "Size, Weight, and Load Limitations" for motor vehicles on public highways. Section 722 sets limits on vehicle weights. With one exception, Michigan does not have a fixed gross vehicle weight (GVW) limit. Instead, Michigan regulates vehicle weight or load through maximum allowable axle loads at various axle configurations. Provisions governing vehicle weight/load by axle are established in Section 722.¹

There are three primary loading standards under Section 722; there are seasonal reductions to those primary loading maximums; and there are exceptions to the primary and seasonal standards for specific industry groups. Subsection 13 provides for those specific industry exemptions. Specifically, Subsection 13 increases axle loading maximums established in subsections 1, 2, 3, and 4 by 10% for vehicles transporting agricultural commodities or raw timber, excluding farm equipment and fuel, *"from the place of harvest or farm storage to the first point of delivery on a road in this state."*

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill does not appear to have a direct fiscal impact on the state or local units of government.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

¹ The one specific instance where the Michigan Vehicle Code does establish a fixed GVW limit is in Section 719, which establishes a 164,000 pound GVW limit for certain log transport vehicles. Section 719 also limits the maximum number of axles on a motor vehicle to 11.