

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1117

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, March 30, 2005

Title: An act relating to the highway weight limit for farm implements.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions for the transport of farm implements on highways.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Ericksen, Linville, Newhouse, Buri, Strow and B. Sullivan).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/10/05, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/23/05, 3/30/05 [DP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Jacobsen, Vice Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Eide, Esser, Oke, Spanel and Weinstein.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Mulliken.

Staff: Hayley Gamble (786-7452)

Background: Washington State enacted the Dairy Nutrient Management Act in 1998, which requires farmers to have plans to remove dairy nutrients during certain times of the year and to dispose of the nutrients through spreading over a field or other methods.

The current gross weight limit on Washington roads is 105,500 pounds for non-reducible loads. Some trucks designed for dairy nutrient transportation and spreading would be considered overweight when fully loaded. As these loads are divisible, they are not considered eligible for an overweight permit.

Federal funds can be withheld if a state is found to be out of compliance with federal weight restrictions.

Summary of Bill: Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is directed to work with the federal government, local transportation authorities, transportation agencies in other states, and legislative members and/or staff to conduct a study regarding overweight farming vehicles.

Until the study and any subsequent law or rule changes are enacted, certain farm implements that weigh up to 105,500 pounds and are used to transport dairy nutrients in order to comply with the Dairy Nutrient Management Act may travel on city or county roads, under certain conditions. A city or county road authority may restrict the movement of such vehicles.

Additionally, the Legislature requests that the United States Department of Transportation allow certain farm implements to travel on Washington highways under rules or policies established by WSDOT, prior to the study being completed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: Farming equipment of this type uses balloon tires that spread the weight of the vehicle. To enter and exit fields the weight of these vehicles must be well spread. Farming equipment is much larger than it used to be, and needs to be this large for farms to remain profitable. Other vehicles are traveling on the roads and are overweight. This is a statewide problem and this bill is a good compromise towards fixing the problem. These vehicles cannot get permits as they are considered divisible loads.

Testimony Against: None.

Other: Currently, the state does not know the impact of balloon tires. Other groups, such as the logging industry, may ask for exemptions.

Who Testified: PRO: Chris Cheney, Washington Dairy Federation (WDF); Ron Wesson WDF; Jim Heeringa, WDF; Representative Ericksen; Heather Hansen, Washington Cattle Feeders Association. OTHER: Jeff Devere, WSP; Tim Erickson, WSDOT.