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HOUSE BILL 1657

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State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Representatives Morell, McDermott, Rockefeller, Bush and Van Luven;  
by request of Washington State Patrol

Read first time 01/31/2001. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to weight limits for fire-fighting apparatus;  
2 amending RCW 46.44.091; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The purpose of this act is to provide  
5 flexibility for the department of transportation to adopt rules that  
6 will allow certain fire-fighting apparatuses to operate on state and  
7 local highways if they exceed existing gross weight limits currently  
8 established in statute. The legislature recognizes that, due to their  
9 nature of operation, fire-fighting apparatuses do not significantly  
10 contribute to the deterioration of surface roadways. The legislature  
11 further recognizes that any exemption or special permit that would  
12 allow the apparatuses to operate on state and local highways should  
13 also consider any bridge located in the designated fire service area to  
14 assure that the exemption or special permit will not result in any  
15 potential damage to a bridge or similar structure. The legislature  
16 further recognizes that any exemption or special permit granted as a  
17 result of this act must not compromise existing state and federal  
18 safety standards.

1       **Sec. 2.** RCW 46.44.091 and 1989 c 52 s 1 are each amended to read  
2 as follows:

3       (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (3) and (4) of this  
4 section, no special permit shall be issued for movement on any state  
5 highway or route of a state highway within the limits of any city or  
6 town where the gross weight, including load, exceeds the following  
7 limits:

8       (a) Twenty-two thousand pounds on a single axle or on dual axles  
9 with a wheelbase between the first and second axles of less than three  
10 feet six inches;

11       (b) Forty-three thousand pounds on dual axles having a wheelbase  
12 between the first and second axles of not less than three feet six  
13 inches but less than seven feet;

14       (c) On any group of axles or in the case of a vehicle employing two  
15 single axles with a wheel base between the first and last axle of not  
16 less than seven feet but less than ten feet, a weight in pounds  
17 determined by multiplying six thousand five hundred times the distance  
18 in feet between the center of the first axle and the center of the last  
19 axle of the group;

20       (d) On any group of axles with a wheel base between the first and  
21 last axle of not less than ten feet but less than thirty feet, a weight  
22 in pounds determined by multiplying two thousand two hundred times the  
23 sum of twenty and the distance in feet between the center of the first  
24 axle and the center of the last axle of the group;

25       (e) On any group of axles with a wheel base between the first and  
26 last axle of thirty feet or greater, a weight in pounds determined by  
27 multiplying one thousand six hundred times the sum of forty and the  
28 distance in feet between the center of the first axle and the center of  
29 the last axle of the group.

30       (2) The total weight of a vehicle or combination of vehicles  
31 allowable by special permit under subsection (1) of this section shall  
32 be governed by the lesser of the weights obtained by using the total  
33 number of axles as a group or any combination of axles as a group.

34       (3) The weight limitations pertaining to single axles may be  
35 exceeded to permit the movement of equipment operating upon single  
36 pneumatic tires having a rim width of twenty inches or more and a rim  
37 diameter of twenty-four inches or more or dual pneumatic tires having  
38 a rim width of sixteen inches or more and a rim diameter of twenty-four

1 inches or more and specially designed vehicles manufactured and  
2 certified for special permits prior to July 1, 1975.

3 (4) Permits may be issued for weights in excess of the limitations  
4 contained in subsection (1) of this section on highways or sections of  
5 highways which have been designed and constructed for weights in excess  
6 of such limitations, or for any shipment duly certified as necessary by  
7 military officials, or by officials of public or private power  
8 facilities, or when in the opinion of the department of transportation  
9 the movement or action is a necessary movement or action: PROVIDED,  
10 That in the judgment of the department of transportation the structures  
11 and highway surfaces on the routes involved are capable of sustaining  
12 weights in excess of such limitations and it is not reasonable for  
13 economic or operational considerations to transport such excess weights  
14 by rail or water for any substantial distance of the total mileage  
15 applied for.

16 (5) Permits may be issued for the operation of (~~fire trucks on the~~  
17 ~~public highways if the maximum gross weight on any single axle does not~~  
18 ~~exceed twenty four thousand pounds and the gross weight on any tandem~~  
19 ~~axle does not exceed forty three thousand pounds~~) fire-fighting  
20 apparatus to exceed the weight limitations contained in subsection (1)  
21 of this section, subject to federal and state rules and national  
22 standards adopted by the department of transportation. A permit may be  
23 issued for a period up to five years.

24 (6) Application shall be made in writing on special forms provided  
25 by the department of transportation and shall be submitted at least  
26 thirty-six hours in advance of the proposed movement. An application  
27 for a special permit for a gross weight of any combination of vehicles  
28 exceeding two hundred thousand pounds shall be submitted in writing to  
29 the department of transportation at least thirty days in advance of the  
30 proposed movement.

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