

Legislative Analysis



RAISE FREEWAY SPEED LIMIT FOR TRUCKS

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House Bill 5104 as enrolled

Public Act 19 of 2006

Sponsor: Rep. Bruce Caswell

House Committee: Transportation

Senate Committee: Transportation

Complete to 8-23-06

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5104 AS ENROLLED

The bill would amend Section 627 of the Michigan Vehicle Code (MCL 257.627) to increase the speed limit from 55 to 60 miles per hour for truck-tractors, truck-tractors with semi-trailers or trailers, or combinations of those vehicles, on freeways where the maximum speed limit is 70 miles per hour. (Currently, the speed limit for these vehicles is 55 miles per hour on highways, streets, or freeways and may not exceed 35 mph when reduced loadings are being enforced.) The bill would take effect nine months after being enacted into law. (It will take effect November 9, 2006)

The bill would also specify that the speed limit for a person operating a passenger vehicle drawing another vehicle or trailer is the posted speed limit. The current limit is 55 miles per hour for a passenger vehicle towing another vehicle or trailer unless the vehicle or trailer has a maximum of two wheels and does not exceed the combined weight of 750 pounds for a trailer and load, or a trailer coach not more than 26 feet long with brakes on each wheel and attached to the vehicle an equalizing air-stabilizing coupling unit. The bill would delete all of this language and instead prohibit a person from operating a passenger vehicle towing another vehicle or trailer from exceeding the posted speed limit.

The bill would also remove references to the words "drive" and "driver" and replace them with "operate" and "operator."

[Note: The code also specifies in general that vehicle operators must "drive at a careful and prudent speed not greater than nor less than is reasonable and proper, having due regard to the traffic, surface, and width of the highway and of any other condition then existing." The code also says, "A person shall not drive a vehicle . . . at a speed greater than that which will permit a stop within the assured, clear distance ahead."]

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill could result in additional costs to the Michigan Department of Transportation to the extent that it has to replace speed limit signs on the state's limited access highways. There is no estimate of what these additional signage costs would be.

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