



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



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

Senate Bill 516 (as introduced 6-22-11)
Sponsor: Senator John Proos
Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 9-26-11

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to include a modified agriculture vehicle in provisions related to speed limits, reflective devices, and vehicle registration taxes; and allow a modified agriculture vehicle or any vehicle carrying a load that was at least 50% agricultural commodities to exceed prescribed vehicle weight limits by 10%.

"Modified agriculture vehicle" would mean a vehicle that has been modified from its original use in a manner that enhances its utility as transportation for agricultural products.

The bill would prohibit a person operating a modified agriculture vehicle from exceeding a speed of 45 miles per hour.

Under the Code, when operated on the highway, every vehicle with a maximum potential speed of 25 miles per hour, implement of husbandry, farm tractor, or special mobile equipment must be identified with a reflective device. The Code specifies the shape, size, color, and placement of the device on the vehicle. Under the bill, these provisions also would apply to a modified agriculture vehicle.

The Code prescribes maximum axle loads and gross vehicle weights for different types of vehicles. Under the bill, a modified agriculture vehicle, or any vehicle carrying a load that was at least 50% agricultural commodities, would be considered to be in compliance with the maximum weight requirements if its gross weight and/or axle weights were not more than 10% greater than the maximum weights otherwise permitted. A vehicle that was not in compliance with the maximum weight requirements, however, would be considered to be in violation for the full weight without consideration of the 10% compliance allowance.

The Code prescribes a vehicle registration tax according to the type and weight of the vehicle. For a road tractor, truck, or truck tractor owned by a farmer and used exclusively in connection with a farming operation, including a farmer hauling livestock or farm equipment for other farmers for remuneration in kind or in labor, but not for money, or used for the transportation of the farmer and his or her family, and not used for hire, the tax is 74 cents per 100 pounds of empty vehicle weight. If the vehicle is also used for a nonfarming operation, the farmer is subject to the highest registration tax applicable to the nonfarm use of the vehicle, but is not subject to more than one tax rate under the Code. Under the bill, these provisions also would apply to a modified agriculture vehicle.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill could potentially have a positive fiscal impact on the State in the form of additional license plate revenue. Any additional revenue would be deposited into the Michigan Transportation Fund. The amount of additional revenue is indeterminate and dependent on the number of vehicles affected by the bill.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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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.