



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2017 Wisconsin Act 299
[2017 Assembly Bill 754]

**Vehicle Weight Limits
on Certain Highways in
Ashland and Vilas Counties**

2017 Wisconsin Act 299 eliminates a special weight limit provision that applied only to portions of State Trunk Highway (STH) 13 in Ashland County and STH 70 in Vilas County, and adds those highway routes as eligible routes for which the Department of Transportation (DOT) may issue a special permit, known as the “Michigan border permit,” for the transport of certain forest products.

BACKGROUND

Generally, state law prohibits a person from operating on a highway any vehicle or combination of vehicles that exceeds certain limits on size, weight, or load, unless that person possesses a permit issued by DOT, subject to certain exceptions.

2017 Wisconsin Act 59, the 2017-19 Biennial Budget Act (Budget Act), created a weight limit provision that applied only to certain portions of STH 13 in Ashland County and STH 70 in Vilas County.

Specifically, the Budget Act provided that, on the specified highway routes above, vehicles with 11 axles transporting exclusively forest products or lumber that were operated without a permit were subject to a maximum gross weight limitation of 164,000 pounds, but had no weight limitation per wheel, axle, or group of axles.

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2017 Wisconsin Act 299 repeals the Budget Act’s provisions that applied to the specified highway routes above, and instead adds those specified highways as eligible routes for which DOT may issue a Michigan border permit.

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature’s Web site at: <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov>.

State law authorizes DOT to issue, either annually or for consecutive months, a Michigan border permit, which generally allows vehicles or a combination of vehicles to exceed certain statutory length and weight requirements in the following circumstances, provided the vehicle or combination of vehicles does not violate length or weight limitations under Michigan law:

- Transportation of loads within 11 miles from the Michigan-Wisconsin state line.
- Transportation of raw forest products, lumber, or forestry biomass on certain portions of U. S. Highway 2.
- Transportation of raw forest products, lumber, or forestry biomass on any other specified highway route.

The Act adds certain portions of STH 13 in Ashland County and STH 70 in Vilas County as designated highway routes under the third category above. Specifically, under the Act, DOT may issue a Michigan border permit for a vehicle or combination of vehicles exceeding certain statutory limitations to transport raw forest products, lumber, or forestry biomass on the following highway routes:

- STH 13, from the junction of U.S. Highway 2 and STH 13 in the City of Ashland to the intersection of STH 13 and Old Airport Road in Ashland County.
- STH 70, from the junction of STH 70 and U.S. Highway 45 in the City of Eagle River to the junction of STH 70 and U.S. Highway 51 in Vilas County.

Effective date: April 18, 2018

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April 25, 2018

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