



2011 SENATE BILL 422

February 3, 2012 – Introduced by Senators LAZICH and LASEE, cosponsored by Representatives PETROWSKI and BIES, by request of The Department of Transportation. Referred to Committee on Transportation and Elections.

1 **AN ACT** *to repeal* 348.07 (2) (gr), 348.07 (2) (i), 348.26 (5) and 348.27 (13); and
2 *to amend* 194.32, 348.05 (2) (f), 348.07 (1), 348.07 (2) (fs), 348.07 (2) (g), 348.07
3 (2) (gv), 348.07 (2) (h), 348.07 (4), 348.07 (4m), 348.08 (1) (a), 348.25 (4) (intro.)
4 and 348.28 (1) of the statutes; **relating to:** the length of vehicles that may be
5 operated on a highway and granting rule-making authority.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, a person may not operate on a highway any combination of two vehicles (vehicle combination) with an overall length in excess of 65 feet unless a specific exception applies or the person has a permit to exceed these lengths.

This bill increases the generally applicable overall length limit for vehicle combinations from 65 feet to 70 feet. However, the Department of Transportation (DOT) may, by rule, establish exceptions to this general length limit with respect to specific types of vehicles or designated highways. Under the bill, motor bus-trailer combinations owned and operated by, and for the exclusive use of, nonprofit organizations are subject to the general length limit of 70 feet, an increase from their length limit of 58 feet under current law.

Under current law, there is an exception to the general length limit that allows for the operation of tractor-semitrailer combinations with an overall length not exceeding 75 feet on the state trunk highway system except those parts designated by DOT by rule as ineligible for this length limit or as long truck routes for which there is no length limit. In addition, there is an exception to the general single vehicle

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length limit that allows for the operation of a semitrailer as part of a vehicle combination if the semitrailer does not exceed 53 feet, its kingpin-to-axle length does not exceed 43 feet, and it is operated on the state trunk highway system except those parts designated by DOT by rule as ineligible for this length limit.

Under this bill, this 75 feet length limit exception for tractor-semitrailer combinations, and this 53 feet length limit exception for certain semitrailers, apply on all highways, not just state trunk highways, subject to the same exceptions for designated ineligible highways or long truck routes that apply under current law.

Under current law, the overall length limit for combinations of two or three vehicles operated or transported by the drive-away method in saddlemount combination is 65 feet. The term “saddlemount combination” is neither defined nor described by statute, but DOT defines it by rule as a combination of vehicles in which a truck or truck tractor tows one or more trucks or truck tractors, each connected by a saddle to the vehicle in front of it; the towed vehicles essentially piggyback the power unit or one another. Also under current law, DOT and local authorities may issue permits for combinations of two or three vehicles operated or transported by the drive-away method in saddlemount combination with an overall length not exceeding 65 feet.

This bill increases, from 65 feet to 75 feet, the length limit for combinations of two or three vehicles operated or transported by the drive-away method in saddlemount combination. In addition, the bill eliminates provisions of current law related to the issuance of permits for these vehicle combinations.

The bill also increases, from 65 feet to 66 feet, the vehicle length limit for articulated buses operated in urban areas.

For further information see the *state and local* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** 194.32 of the statutes, as affected by 2011 Wisconsin Act 54, is
2 amended to read:

3 **194.32 Buses, restrictions.** No common motor carrier of passengers shall
4 operate any passenger-carrying bus over any public highway of this state with any
5 trailer or semitrailer attached except for an articulated bus as defined in s. 340.01
6 (2m). ~~Except for an articulated bus as defined in s. 340.01 (2m) which may be 65 feet~~
7 ~~in length, no~~ No interurban motor bus which exceeds 45 feet in length or 8 feet 6
8 ~~inches in width or~~ is of a double-decked open-roof design shall be operated upon the

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1 public highways under the authority of this chapter. As used in this section an
2 interurban motor bus is deemed to be of a “double-decked open-roof design” when
3 passengers are carried therein on an upper level throughout the length of the bus
4 over passengers on a lower level throughout the length of the bus and the bus roof
5 does not extend throughout the length of the bus or is not permanently enclosed with
6 rigid construction.

7 **SECTION 2.** 348.05 (2) (f) of the statutes is amended to read:

8 348.05 (2) (f) Eight feet 8 inches for urban passenger buses and 8 feet 6 inches
9 for interurban passenger buses.

10 **SECTION 3.** 348.07 (1) of the statutes, as affected by 2011 Wisconsin Act 54, is
11 amended to read:

12 348.07 (1) No person, without a permit therefor, may operate on a highway any
13 single vehicle with an overall length in excess of 45 feet or any combination of 2
14 vehicles with an overall length in excess of ~~65~~ 70 feet, except as otherwise provided
15 in subs. (2) ~~and, (2a), and (4m) and s. 348.08 (1).~~

16 **SECTION 4.** 348.07 (2) (fs) of the statutes is amended to read:

17 348.07 (2) (fs) 75 feet for a tractor-semitrailer combination ~~that is operated on~~
18 ~~any part of the state trunk highway system,~~ except as provided in par. (f) or sub. (4m).

19 **SECTION 5.** 348.07 (2) (g) of the statutes is amended to read:

20 348.07 (2) (g) 48 feet for a semitrailer or trailer operated as part of a 2-vehicle
21 combination, except as provided in par. ~~(gr) or (gv).~~

22 **SECTION 6.** 348.07 (2) (gr) of the statutes is repealed.

23 **SECTION 7.** 348.07 (2) (gv) of the statutes is amended to read:

24 348.07 (2) (gv) 53 feet for a semitrailer whose length from kingpin to axle does
25 not exceed 43 feet and which is operated as part of a 2-vehicle combination ~~on any~~

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1 part of the state trunk highway system, except as provided in par. ~~(gr)~~ or sub. (4m).

2 The length limits in this paragraph do not apply to a trailer or a semitrailer that is

3 authorized to operate under par. (im).

4 **SECTION 8.** 348.07 (2) (h) of the statutes is amended to read:

5 348.07 **(2)** (h) ~~65~~ Sixty-six feet for articulated buses operated in urban areas.

6 **SECTION 9.** 348.07 (2) (i) of the statutes is repealed.

7 **SECTION 10.** 348.07 (4) of the statutes is amended to read:

8 348.07 **(4)** The secretary shall, by rule, designate the highways to which sub.

9 (2) (f), (fm), and (gm), ~~and (gr)~~ and s. 348.08 (1) (e) apply. The designation of highways

10 under this subsection may not be inconsistent with the designation of highways

11 made by the U.S. secretary of transportation under P.L. 97-424, section 411. The

12 secretary may also designate additional highways by rule. In adopting a rule

13 designating other highways, which may include 2-lane highways, the secretary

14 shall specify the factors which resulted in the determination to designate the

15 highways. These factors shall include, but are not limited to, safety, economics,

16 energy savings, industry productivity and competition. Vehicles to which sub. (2) (f),

17 (fm), and (gm), ~~and (gr)~~ and s. 348.08 (1) (e) apply may also operate on highways not

18 designated under this subsection for a distance of 15 miles or less in order to obtain

19 access to a highway designated under this subsection or to reach fuel, food,

20 maintenance, repair, rest, staging, terminal or vehicle assembly facilities or points

21 of loading or unloading. The secretary may, by rule, designate an access route of more

22 than 15 miles from a highway designated under this subsection when the longer

23 route provides safer and better access to a location which is within the 15-mile limit.

24 Household goods carriers may operate between highways designated under this

25 subsection and points of loading and unloading.

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1 **SECTION 11.** 348.07 (4m) of the statutes is amended to read:

2 348.07 **(4m)** The secretary shall, by rule, designate those parts of the state
3 trunk highway system to which sub. (2) (fs) and (gv) do not apply. For each part of
4 the state trunk highway system designated under this subsection, the secretary
5 shall specify the factors that resulted in the determination to designate the part as
6 not suitable to accommodate vehicle lengths as specified in sub. (2) (fs) and (gv). The
7 secretary may, by rule, establish exceptions to the vehicle-combination length
8 limitation specified in sub. (1), including establishing any greater or lesser length
9 limitation than that specified in sub. (1), with respect to specific types of vehicles
10 identified by the secretary or highways designated by the secretary, but the secretary
11 may not establish under this subsection any length limitation inconsistent with sub.
12 (2) or (2a) or s. 348.08 (1).

13 **SECTION 12.** 348.08 (1) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

14 348.08 **(1)** (a) Two or 3 vehicles may, without such permit, be drawn or attached
15 when such vehicles are being transported by the drive-away method in saddlemount
16 combination and the overall length of such combination of vehicles does not exceed
17 65 75 feet.

18 **SECTION 13.** 348.25 (4) (intro.) of the statutes, as affected by 2011 Wisconsin
19 Acts 56, 57 and 58, is amended to read:

20 348.25 **(4)** (intro.) Except as provided under s. 348.26 (4), ~~(5)~~, (6), or (7) or 348.27
21 (3), (3m), (4m), (9), (9m), (9r), (9t), (10), (12), ~~(13)~~, (15), ~~or~~ (16), or (18) permits shall
22 be issued only for the transporting of a single article or vehicle which exceeds
23 statutory size, weight or load limitations and which cannot reasonably be divided or
24 reduced to comply with statutory size, weight or load limitations, except that:

25 **SECTION 14.** 348.26 (5) of the statutes is repealed.

