

- 1 **AN ACT relating to:** requiring the department of transportation to study Wisconsin
2 truck size and weight limits.

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

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PREFATORY NOTE: This bill draft was prepared for the special committee on highway weight limits. The study committee was created by the joint legislative council in response to the mandate of 2005 Wisconsin Act 167 which provides as follows:

“The joint legislative council shall conduct a comprehensive study to review the system of motor vehicle weight limits on the state’s highways and bridges. The study shall include the issues and interrelationships between economic impacts, truck configurations, expected compliance levels and enforcement constraints, and impacts on the public infrastructure, operational, and safety issues. The joint legislative council shall convene a committee to conduct the study, and representatives of local government, the department of transportation, the trucking industry, the raw forest products industry, and agricultural producers shall be invited to serve on the committee....”.

Early in its work, the special committee was informed of the recent completion of a study of truck size and weight limits in Minnesota. The final report of this study was published in June 2006 in a report entitled “Minnesota Truck Size and Weight Project”. The report was prepared by consultants for the Minnesota department of transportation, although the department provided leadership for the study. The study was comprehensive and included participation by, and input from, a substantial number of public and private stakeholders. In the study, Minnesota assessed changes to the truck size and weight limit laws that would strike a balance between: (1) benefits to the Minnesota economy resulting from appropriate size and weight limits; and (2) continuing public safety and protection of state roads and bridges.

The special committee noted many similarities between issues considered in the Minnesota study and issues that were suggested to the special committee for consideration. The special committee believes that there would be substantial value in conducting a similar study in Wisconsin. The Minnesota study identified a number of truck axle and weight configurations, changes in the seasonal weight limits, and other

policy modifications that would have a positive cost-benefit ratio when comparing costs of protecting the highway infrastructure and ensuring public safety to the benefits to the state's economy of reducing the costs of trucking by allowing heavier loads. The committee determined that if similar findings were made in a Wisconsin study, statutory and policy changes could be based on those findings and would result in a net benefit to the Wisconsin economy without negative effects on the infrastructure and safety of state highways, roads, and bridges.

The special committee also determined that the broad scope of such a study would require significant expertise, time, and resources, and would be beyond the capabilities of the committee. Therefore, the special committee recommends that the department of transportation be directed to undertake a study of the costs and benefits of the Wisconsin truck size and weight limit laws to identify changes in those laws that would have a net benefit to Wisconsin's economy, when considering the costs of protecting highway infrastructure and safety, and the benefits that would result from reducing the cost of truck transportation.

1 **SECTION 1. Nonstatutory provisions. (1) DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.**

2 (a) The department of transportation shall undertake a study of Wisconsin's truck size
3 and weight limit laws, to identify changes in those laws that would have a net benefit to
4 Wisconsin's economy, when considering the costs of protecting highway infrastructure and
5 safety, and the benefits that would result from reducing the cost of truck transportation.

6 (b) The department of transportation shall review, as part of the study under paragraph
7 (a), those vehicle configurations, changes in seasonal restrictions, and other policy issues that
8 were found to have a net benefit in the cost-benefit analysis in the Minnesota truck size and
9 weight project final report that was issued in June 2006.

10 (c) The department of transportation shall appoint an advisory committee under section
11 227.13 of the statutes to assist in the review and report required under this section. The
12 advisory committee shall include representation from the department of commerce and local
13 governmental units, industries, small businesses, and other groups and individuals that are
14 interested in and knowledgeable about truck size and weight limits. The department of

1 transportation shall allow all advisory committee members to present written commentary on
2 or dissenting views from the department's report and shall incorporate that commentary and
3 any dissents into its final report. The advisory committee shall include representatives of all
4 of the following interests:

- 5 1. Highway safety.
- 6 2. Local highway construction and maintenance.
- 7 3. Trucking companies.
- 8 4. Industries and small businesses that depend on truck transport.
- 9 5. Enforcement.

10 (d) The department of transportation shall prepare a report on the results of its study
11 under this section and shall submit the report to the legislature in the manner provided under
12 section 13.172 (3) of the statutes, no later than [January 1, 2009] [the first day of the 7th month
13 beginning after publication].

COMMENT: The report in paragraph will be submitted to all members of
the legislature, pursuant to the reference to s. 13.172 (3), stats.

14 (END)