

ELECTRIC TRUCK AXLE LOAD MAXIMUM

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Senate Bill 501 (S-1) as reported from House committee

Sponsor: Sen. Darrin Camilleri

House Committee: Transportation, Mobility and Infrastructure

Senate Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure

Revised 7-11-24

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

Senate Bill 501 would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to allow a vehicle or combination of vehicles with a gross weight of up to 82,000 pounds that is powered in whole or part by electric batteries to exceed certain axle loading maximums and weight load maximums prescribed under section 722 of the code by a total of up to 2,000 pounds for all axles of the truck, truck tractor, or power unit.

In addition, the code now allows a vehicle with a gross weight of up to 80,000 pounds that is operated by an engine fueled by compressed or liquefied natural gas to exceed the same axle loading maximums and weight load maximums by up to 2,000 pounds. The bill would instead provide that a vehicle *or combination of vehicles* with a gross weight of up to 82,000 pounds that is operated as described above can exceed the applicable axle loading and weight load maximums by *a total of up to 2,000 pounds for all axles of the truck, truck tractor, or power unit*.

MCL 257.722

FISCAL IMPACT:

Sections 716 through 726c of the Michigan Vehicle Code govern the size, weight, and load of vehicles and vehicle combinations operating on public highways. In general, these sections establish standard or “normal” size, weight, and load maximums, provide specific exceptions to the standard or normal maximums, and provide for the enforcement of the size, weight, and load maximums, including penalties for violations.

Section 722 establishes specific weight or load maximums. These weight or load maximums are generally designated for axles and determined based on the configuration and spacing of axles and generally not on gross vehicle weight.

As noted above, Senate Bill 501 establishes exceptions for certain loading maximums in section 722 for certain vehicles and vehicle combinations. Note that the 80,000-pound gross vehicle weight reference in current law, and the 82,000-pound reference in Senate Bill 501, do not establish a vehicle weight limit. These weight references are one element in the definition of the kinds of vehicles the axle-based load limits—and related exceptions—apply to.

The bill would have no impact on vehicles or vehicle combinations with a gross vehicle weight in excess of 82,000 pounds. Of approximately 98,000 weight-based vehicle registrations under section 801(1)(k) of the Michigan Vehicle Code, approximately 12,000 currently have elected gross vehicle weight registrations over 80,000 pounds, including almost 10,000 with elected gross vehicle weight registrations in excess of 90,000 pounds.

In addition, the exceptions to normal axle weight limits established under Senate Bill 501, of a total of up to 2,000 pounds, only apply for all axles of the *truck, truck tractor, or power unit*. That is to say, the bill does not increase axle weight or load maximums for any semi-trailer or trailer pulled by a truck, truck tractor, or power unit.

Federal law currently governs vehicle weight limitations on the federal interstate highway system (23 USC 127).¹ Section 422 of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019,² amended 23 USC 127(s), effective February 15, 2019, to read as follows:

(s) NATURAL GAS AND ELECTRIC BATTERY VEHICLES.—A vehicle, if operated by an engine fueled primarily by natural gas or powered primarily by means of electric battery power, may exceed the weight limit on the power unit by up to 2,000 pounds (up to a maximum gross vehicle weight of 82,000 pounds) under this section.

Senate Bill 501 mirrors the 2019 amendments to 23 USC 127(s).

The bill has no apparent direct fiscal impact on state government or local units of government.

POSITIONS:

Clean Fuels Michigan testified in support of the bill. (6-4-24)

The following entities indicated support for the bill:

- Department of Transportation (6-4-24)
- ACEEE (American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy) (6-4-24)
- Electrification Coalition (6-4-24)
- EMA Truck and Engine Manufacturers Association (6-4-24)
- FLO (6-11-24)
- Michigan Conservative Energy Forum (6-4-24)
- Michigan EIBC (Energy Innovation Business Council) (6-4-24)
- Michigan Environmental Council (6-4-24)
- Michigan League of Conservative Voters (6-4-24)
- Michigan Retailers Association (6-4-24)
- Michigan Teamsters Joint Council 43 (6-4-24)
- Michigan Trucking Association (6-4-24)
- Navistar, Inc. (6-4-24)
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) (6-11-24)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

¹ 23 USC 127: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/23/127>

² Division G of Public Law 116-6: <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ6/PLAW-116publ6.pdf>