

111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 969

To permit commercial vehicles at weights up to 129,000 pounds to use certain highways of the Interstate System in the State of Idaho, which would provide significant savings in the transportation of goods throughout the United States, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Mr. SIMPSON (for himself and Mr. MINNICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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## A BILL

To permit commercial vehicles at weights up to 129,000 pounds to use certain highways of the Interstate System in the State of Idaho, which would provide significant savings in the transportation of goods throughout the United States, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Idaho Efficient Vehicle  
5 Demonstration Act of 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

1           (1) States including Montana, Nevada, Utah,  
2           and Wyoming have been grandfathered the right to  
3           operate up to 129,000-pound or greater vehicle com-  
4           binations on 9 axles or more on Federal highways;

5           (2) laws governing Federal highway funding ef-  
6           fectively impose a limit of 105,500 pounds on the  
7           weight of vehicles permitted to use the Interstate  
8           System within the State of Idaho;

9           (3) the State of Idaho is surrounded by the  
10          States specified in paragraph (1) that allow higher  
11          weight limits on the Interstate System, which puts  
12          the State of Idaho at a disadvantage in moving  
13          freight within Idaho and into those surrounding  
14          States;

15          (4) in 2003, the legislature of the State of  
16          Idaho adopted House Bill 395, which established a  
17          10-year pilot project that allows vehicle combinations  
18          up to 129,000 pounds to be operated on 10 axles on  
19          specific routes in that State, but does not address  
20          the Interstate System;

21          (5) in enacting the pilot project program in  
22          House Bill 395 of the State, the legislature required  
23          the Idaho Transportation Department to report to  
24          the legislature on the effect of the program;

1           (6) the Idaho Transportation Department is re-  
2           quired to submit reports every 3 years during the  
3           10-year life of the pilot project program that de-  
4           scribe the results of monitoring and evaluation of all  
5           important impacts, including impacts to safety,  
6           bridges, and pavement, on all pilot project routes;

7           (7) the pilot project program terminates on  
8           July 1, 2013, unless the program is otherwise ex-  
9           tended or sooner repealed by the legislature;

10          (8) the administration of the pilot project, cou-  
11          pled with the fact that vehicle combinations cannot  
12          operate at 129,000 pounds on the Interstate System,  
13          has forced those heavier vehicle combinations to di-  
14          vert onto small State and local roads on which high-  
15          er vehicle weight limits are allowed under State law;

16          (9) the diversion of those vehicles onto those  
17          roads increases fuel costs because of increased idling  
18          time and total travel time along those roads;

19          (10) the cost of transportation fuel has in-  
20          creased more than 80 percent between calendar  
21          years 2007 and 2008; and

22          (11) permitting commercial vehicles to travel on  
23          a select few Interstate System highways within the  
24          State at increased weight limits would provide—

1 (A) significant savings in the transpor-  
2 tation of goods throughout the State; and

3 (B) substantial data and an opportunity  
4 for analysis of the impacts of the vehicles on  
5 bridges, highway safety, and pavements.

6 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act the following definitions apply:

8 (1) COVERED INTERSTATE SYSTEM HIGH-  
9 WAY.—The term “covered Interstate System high-  
10 way” means any portion of a highway designated as  
11 a route on the Interstate System that, as of the date  
12 of enactment of this Act, is not exempt from the re-  
13 quirements of subsection (a) of section 127 of title  
14 23, United States Code, pursuant to a waiver under  
15 that subsection.

16 (2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means  
17 the Director of the Idaho Transportation Depart-  
18 ment.

19 (3) INTERSTATE SYSTEM.—The term “Inter-  
20 state System” has the meaning given the term in  
21 section 101(a) of title 23, United States Code.

22 (4) PILOT PROJECT.—The term “pilot project”  
23 means the 10-year pilot project of the State, estab-  
24 lished in 2003 under House Bill 395 of the State,  
25 that permits vehicle combinations weighing up to

1 129,000 pounds to be operated on specific routes in  
2 that State.

3 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
4 the Secretary of Transportation.

5 (6) STATE.—The term “State” means the State  
6 of Idaho.

7 **SEC. 4. WAIVER OF HIGHWAY FUNDING REDUCTION RELAT-**  
8 **ING TO WEIGHT OF VEHICLES USING INTER-**  
9 **STATE SYSTEM HIGHWAYS.**

10 (a) PROHIBITION RELATING TO CERTAIN VEHI-  
11 CLES.—Notwithstanding section 127(a) of title 23, United  
12 States Code, the total amount of funds apportioned to the  
13 State under section 104(b)(1) of that title for any period  
14 may not be reduced under section 127(a) if the State per-  
15 mits a vehicle combination described in subsection (b) to  
16 use a covered Interstate System highway in the State in  
17 accordance with this Act.

18 (b) COMBINATION VEHICLES IN EXCESS OF 105,500  
19 POUNDS UP TO 129,000 POUNDS.—A vehicle described in  
20 this subsection is a vehicle that—

21 (1) has a weight in excess of 105,500 pounds  
22 but not more than 129,000 pounds;

23 (2) consists of a power unit hauling 2 or more  
24 trailers or semitrailers;

1           (3) does not exceed any vehicle weight limita-  
2           tion that is applicable under State law to the oper-  
3           ation of the vehicle on highways in the State that  
4           are not part of the Interstate System, as those laws  
5           are in effect on the date of enactment of this Act;  
6           and

7           (4) is limited to travel only on—

8                   (A) the portion of Interstate Route 15 ex-  
9                   tending from the Montana border to the junc-  
10                  tion with Interstate Route 86;

11                   (B) the portion of Interstate Route 86 ex-  
12                   tending from the junction of Interstate Route  
13                   15 to the junction with Interstate Route 84;  
14                  and

15                   (C) the portion of Interstate Route 84 ex-  
16                   tending from the Utah border to the Oregon  
17                  border.

18           (c) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—

19                   (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2),  
20                   this section and the authority provided under this  
21                   section shall terminate on July 1, 2013.

22                   (2) EXCEPTIONS.—This section and the author-  
23                   ity provided under this section shall terminate on—

1 (A) a date that is later than the date spec-  
2 ified in paragraph (1), if the project is extended  
3 to that later date by the State; or

4 (B) any date that is before, on, or after  
5 the date specified in paragraph (1), if the Sec-  
6 retary—

7 (i) determines that—

8 (I) operation of vehicles described  
9 in subsection (b) on covered Interstate  
10 System highways has adversely af-  
11 fected safety on the overall highway  
12 system; or

13 (II) the Director has failed to  
14 collect the data described in section  
15 5(2); and

16 (ii) publishes the determination, to-  
17 gether with the date of termination of this  
18 section, in the Federal Register.

19 (d) CONSULTATION REGARDING TERMINATION FOR  
20 SAFETY.—In making a determination under subsection  
21 (c)(2)(A)(i), the Secretary shall consult with the Director.

22 **SEC. 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STATE.**

23 For the purpose of section 4, the State shall be con-  
24 sidered to meet the conditions under this section if the  
25 Director—

1           (1) submits to the Secretary a plan for use in  
2 meeting the conditions described in paragraph (2);  
3 and

4           (2) collects data on the net effects that the op-  
5 eration of vehicles described in section 4(b) on cov-  
6 ered Interstate System highways in the State has on  
7 the safety of the overall highway system, as required  
8 by House Bill 395 of the State.

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