



State-legal Loads On the Interstate System

Individual states have long set weight limits for their roads and highways. With the advent of the Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways (Interstate system) the Federal Government established its own weight limits for this system. **Several states have received various exemptions from these limits. Many “new” sections of the federal Interstate Highway system have been “grandfathered” in to allow the existing state legal load limits prior to the roadway becoming a portion of the Federal Interstate Highway System.**

Generally, Title 23, Section 127(a), U.S. Code sets Interstate System weight limits at 20,000 pounds on a single axle; 34,000 pounds on tandems and a gross weight of 80,000 pounds on a 36 foot tandem spread. A bridge formula is used to recognize different axle spreads. These maximums include enforcement tolerances.

Based on **safety** considerations, the American Loggers Council (ALC) is proposing an additional exemption for agricultural (including forest) commodity loads that meet state-legal requirements and tolerances. The exemption is expected to result in a shift of a substantial amount of existing trip mileage from two-lane secondary roads and highways to the Interstate System improving safety for the motoring public, including the trucks themselves.

This proposal would also “fix” the issue with the addition of “newly” designated federal interstate highways having to receive piecemeal exemptions based on existing State weight tolerances.

Language introduced in the 113th Congress titled the “Right to Haul Act of 2014, H.R. 5201” included:

Amending Title 23, Chapter 1, Subchapter I, Section 127(a), United States Code, by adding the following final paragraph:

“(j) State Agricultural Exemptions. –

“(1) IN GENERAL. – Notwithstanding subsection (a), individual State weight limitations for an agricultural commodity that are applicable to State highways shall be applicable to the Interstate System within the State’s borders for vehicles carrying an agricultural commodity.

The addition of this paragraph only requests recognizing those agricultural commodities that are already recognized in Individual State statutes.

This action will not be in direct competition with freight moved by rail as it will only pertain to those commodities moving from the farms and forests on the federal interstate highway system considered to be short haul (less than 150 air mile radius) to the point of processing to a finished product. We are not looking for long haul or other exemptions.

For assistance regarding this proposal, please contact Danny Dructor, American Loggers Council, (409) 625-0206.