

By: Perez of Harris

H.B. No. 3331

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the operation of vehicles transporting steel;
3 authorizing a fee.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Sections 621.508(a) and (a-1), Transportation
6 Code, are amended to read as follows:

7 (a) Except as provided by Subsection (a-1), it is an
8 affirmative defense to prosecution of, or an action under
9 Subchapter F for, the offense of operating a vehicle with a single
10 axle weight or tandem axle weight heavier than the axle weight
11 authorized by law that at the time of the offense the vehicle:

12 (1) had a single axle weight or tandem axle weight that
13 was not heavier than the axle weight authorized by law plus 12
14 percent;

15 (2) was loaded with:

16 (A) timber, pulp wood, wood chips, or cotton,
17 livestock, or other agricultural products that are:

18 (i) [~~(A)~~] in their natural state; and

19 (ii) [~~(B)~~] being transported from the place
20 of production to the place of first marketing or first processing;

21 or

22 (B) steel that is being transported from the
23 place of production to the place of first marketing; and

24 (3) was not being operated on a portion of the national

1 system of interstate and defense highways.

2 (a-1) The affirmative defense provided by Subsection (a)
3 does not apply to the excess weights authorized under Section
4 [623.421\(b\)](#) or [623.451\(b\)](#).

5 SECTION 2. Chapter [623](#), Transportation Code, is amended by
6 adding Subchapter W to read as follows:

7 SUBCHAPTER W. VEHICLES TRANSPORTING STEEL

8 Sec. 623.451. PERMIT FOR VEHICLES TRANSPORTING STEEL. (a)

9 The department may issue a permit authorizing the movement of steel
10 by a truck-tractor and semitrailer combination that has six total
11 axles and is equipped with a roll stability support safety system
12 and truck blind spot systems:

13 (1) at a gross weight that is not heavier than 90,000
14 pounds; and

15 (2) with axle weights that comply with the
16 requirements of Section [621.101\(a\)](#), except as authorized by
17 Subsection (b).

18 (b) A vehicle combination operating under a permit issued
19 under Subsection (a) may exceed the axle weights listed in Section
20 [621.101\(a\)](#) for the following axle groups if the overall distance
21 between the first axle of the truck-tractor and the first axle of
22 the first consecutive set of tandem axles is 15 feet or more, the
23 overall distance between the first and last axles of two
24 consecutive sets of tandem axles is 36 feet or more, the distance
25 between each individual axle in each axle group, measured from the
26 center of the axle, is between 48 inches and 54 inches, and:

27 (1) a two-axle group does not exceed 36,500 pounds;

1 and

2 (2) a three-axle group does not exceed 42,500 pounds.

3 (c) To qualify for a permit under this subchapter, a permit
4 fee of \$1,200 must be paid.

5 (d) A permit issued under this subchapter:

6 (1) is valid for one year; and

7 (2) must be carried in the truck-tractor for which it
8 is issued.

9 Sec. 623.452. PERMIT STICKER. (a) When the department
10 issues a permit under this subchapter, the department shall issue a
11 sticker to be placed on the front windshield of the truck-tractor.
12 The department shall design the form of the sticker to aid in the
13 enforcement of weight limits for vehicles.

14 (b) The sticker must:

15 (1) indicate the expiration date of the permit; and

16 (2) be removed from the truck-tractor when:

17 (A) the permit for operation of the vehicle
18 combination expires;

19 (B) a lease of the truck-tractor expires; or

20 (C) the truck-tractor is sold.

21 Sec. 623.453. COUNTY DESIGNATION; DISTRIBUTION OF FEE. (a)
22 An applicant for a permit under this subchapter must designate in
23 the permit application the counties in which the applicant intends
24 to operate. A permit issued under this subchapter is not valid in a
25 county that is not designated in the permit application.

26 (b) Of the fee collected under this subchapter for a permit:

27 (1) 75 percent of the amount collected shall be

1 deposited to the credit of the state highway fund;

2 (2) 15 percent of the amount collected shall be
3 divided equally among and distributed to the counties designated in
4 the permit application; and

5 (3) 10 percent of the amount collected shall be
6 deposited to the credit of the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles
7 fund.

8 (c) At least once each fiscal year, the comptroller shall
9 send the amount due each county under Subsection (b) to the county
10 treasurer or officer performing the function of that office for
11 deposit to the credit of the county road and bridge fund.

12 Sec. 623.454. PERMIT CONDITIONS. (a) Except as provided by
13 Subsections (b) and (c), a vehicle combination operating under a
14 permit under this subchapter may operate on a federal interstate
15 highway or a state, county, or municipal road, including a frontage
16 road adjacent to a federal interstate highway, if the truck-tractor
17 displays a sticker required by Section 623.452 and the vehicle
18 combination does not exceed the maximum axle or gross weight
19 applicable to the combination under the terms of the permit.

20 (b) A permit issued under this subchapter authorizes the
21 operation of a truck-tractor and semitrailer combination only on
22 highways and roads approved by the Texas Department of
23 Transportation.

24 (c) A permit issued under this subchapter does not authorize
25 the operation of a truck-tractor and semitrailer combination on a
26 county road or bridge for which a maximum weight and load limit has
27 been established and posted under Section [621.301](#).

1 Sec. 623.455. CERTAIN COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL ACTIONS
2 PROHIBITED. Unless otherwise provided by state or federal law, a
3 county or municipality may not require a permit, fee, or license for
4 the operation of a vehicle combination described by Section
5 623.451(a) or (b) in addition to a permit, fee, or license required
6 by state law.

7 Sec. 623.456. EXCLUSIVE PERMIT. A permit issued under this
8 subchapter is the only permit issued by the department under this
9 chapter that may be used to transport steel.

10 Sec. 623.457. RULES. (a) The department shall adopt rules
11 necessary to implement this subchapter, including rules governing
12 the application for a permit under this subchapter.

13 (b) The Department of Public Safety shall adopt rules
14 requiring additional safety and driver training for permits issued
15 under this subchapter.

16 SECTION 3. Section [623.003\(b\)](#), Transportation Code, is
17 amended to read as follows:

18 (b) The Texas Department of Transportation shall provide
19 the department with all routing information necessary to complete a
20 permit issued under Section [623.071](#), [623.121](#), [623.142](#), [623.192](#),
21 [623.402](#), [~~or~~] [623.421](#), or [623.451](#).

22 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect January 1, 2026.