

By: Birdwell

S.B. No. 1572

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.