



COUNTY ROAD ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

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Talking Points- SB 448

Summary:

Senate Bill 448, introduced by Sen. Michelle McManus, would provide septic haulers with an exemption from seasonally adjusted weight limits.

CRAM position:

CRAM opposes Senate Bill 448 and any initiative to open county roads to the possibility of additional damages imposed by trucks exceeding seasonally adjusted weight limits.

Background on Frost Laws- Seasonal Weight Restrictions:

Seasonal weight restrictions are enacted each spring to reduce damage caused by even legal load limit commercial vehicles during the freeze-thaw cycle of spring.

As the ground thaws in the spring, water is forced toward the surface exerting pressure under the pavement. This causes weak spots in the pavement and makes the pavement surface more prone to damage. The heavier the vehicle, the greater the possibility of causing harm to roads. During the weight restriction period, trucks traveling on "posted/restricted" roads must carry lighter loads (reduce legal load limit by 25 to 35 percent depending on the road surface) and travel at slower speeds.

The permit process is the first step in the enforcement of seasonal weight restrictions so vital to minimize damage to Michigan's local road system. The county road law (MCL230.7) gives road commissions the authority to recover for damages to the road system.

Although weight restrictions can be applied whenever conditions warrant, on average road commission weight restrictions last 5 to 6 weeks, ranging from March thru May.

Talking Points:

- At a time when funding for Michigan roads is at historic lows, it is unreasonable to make our transportation infrastructure pay the price for poor planning.
- In most cases of divisible loads (septic, propane, and home fuel haulers) there is nothing mandating delivery or removal of a full or legal load limit, which would jeopardize the integrity of the road.
- Certain industries continually ask the legislature to exempt them from frost-laws. This is not in the best interest of motorists or Michigan's aging road network. Although funding needs to be increased to expand funding for all-season roads, it is not reasonable to expect that all of Michigan's 122,000 miles of road can meet this standard. We must rely on sound engineering criterion to tell us which roads can handle legal loads, and which roads need to see a weight reduction.
- Pursuant to Michigan Law, and in coordination with Web sites offered by local road agencies, CRAM offers a convenient Web resource for information on all county seasonal weight restrictions. Visit www.micountyroads.org and click on the seasonal weight restrictions. Inside you will find each county's current restriction status and information on weight restriction laws.