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An Act To Amend the Axle Weight Laws for Trucks Transporting Unprocessed Agricultural Products and Forest Products

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, Maine is dependent on its natural resources-based economy; and

Whereas, the price of diesel fuel in Maine is at an all-time high and is devastating the Maine economy, especially with regard to loggers and truckers carrying forest products and unprocessed agricultural products; and

Whereas, Governor John E. Baldacci has already issued a Declaration of Civil Emergency regarding the high price of diesel fuel and its impact on the State's forest products industry; and

Whereas, this legislation seeks to reduce the economic burdens imposed by axle weight limits on vehicles transporting unprocessed agricultural products or forest products; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 29-A MRS §2353, sub-§4-A is enacted to read:

4-A. Vehicles transporting unprocessed agricultural products or forest products.

Notwithstanding subsection 4, a vehicle transporting unprocessed agricultural products or forest products that exceeds the axle weight limits and axle weight tolerance restrictions imposed under this chapter is not subject to a fine for a violation of those limits and restrictions unless the vehicle exceeds the maximum gross vehicle weight limits, including tolerances, imposed under this chapter.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This bill provides that a vehicle transporting unprocessed agricultural products or forest products that exceeds the axle weight limits and axle weight tolerance restrictions imposed under Maine law is not subject to a fine for a violation of those limits and restrictions unless the vehicle exceeds the maximum gross vehicle weight limits, including tolerances.