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An Act To Improve Safety on Maine's Primary and Secondary Roads, Reduce Road Maintenance Costs and Improve the Environment and the Economy by Allowing Certain Heavy Commercial Vehicles on the Interstate Highway System in Maine

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

Whereas, the United States Congress has enacted and the President of the United States has signed legislation allowing vehicles up to 100,000 pounds gross vehicle weight on all of the Interstate Highway System in Maine; and

Whereas, the federal legislation allows these larger vehicles on the Interstate for a period of only one year beginning December 16, 2009, the date the President signed the legislation; and

Whereas, the Governor has signed a proclamation allowing certain heavier vehicles to travel on the Interstate until the Legislature acts to conform Maine law to the heavier allowances in federal law; and

Whereas, amending the law to allow for heavier vehicles to travel on the Interstate Highway System in Maine rather than on local roads promotes the interests of safety, less pollution and more cost-effective commercial transportation; 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 MRSA §2355-A is enacted to read:

§ 2355-A. Six-axle truck weight pilot project

Notwithstanding any other provision of this subchapter to the contrary, for as long as the provisions of 23 United States Code, Section 127 (a) (11) affording an exemption from the federal vehicle weight limitations for vehicles operating on all portions of the interstate system are in effect, a 6-axle combination vehicle consisting of a 3-axle truck tractor with a tri-axle semitrailer having a maximum gross vehicle weight of 100,000 pounds may, if otherwise in compliance with the requirements of this Title, be operated on any portion of the interstate system subject to the provisions of section 2354.

Special exemptions and exceptions authorized under this subchapter, including but not limited to those providing tolerances or relaxed fines for vehicles carrying special commodities or forest products, and those authorized under sections 2354A, 2354C and 2357 do not apply to vehicles authorized to travel on the interstate system under this section.

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For the purposes of this section, "interstate system" has the same meaning as in Title 23, section 1903, subsection 3.

Sec. 2. Retroactivity. This Act applies retroactively to December 16, 2009.

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

SUMMARY

This bill authorizes 6axle combination vehicles consisting of 3axle truck tractors with tri-axle semitrailers of up to 100,000 pounds gross vehicle weight to operate on the Maine Interstate Highway System, for as long as a federal law exempting the State from the 80,000-pound limit is in effect, if otherwise in compliance with all other requirements of the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 29A. It also specifies that other currently authorized exemptions and exceptions do not apply to those vehicles. The bill would apply retroactively to December 16, 2009, the effective date of the federal legislation authorizing the exemption from the federal weight limit.