

1 SB338  
2 174306-2  
3 By Senator Allen  
4 RFD: Transportation and Energy  
5 First Read: 08-MAR-16

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8 SYNOPSIS: Current law provides for size and weight  
9 restrictions on certain vehicles operating in  
10 Alabama.

11 This bill would allow motor vehicle weight  
12 increases for vehicles that have conversion  
13 equipment installed allowing the vehicle to operate  
14 on compressed natural gas or compressed liquefied  
15 gas.

16  
17 A BILL  
18 TO BE ENTITLED  
19 AN ACT  
20

21 To amend Section 32-9-20, Code of Alabama 1975, as  
22 last amended by Act 2015-325, 2015 Regular Session, relating  
23 to weight restrictions on the operation of certain motor  
24 vehicles; to allow for weight increases for vehicles having  
25 conversion equipment installed that allows the vehicle to  
26 operate on compressed natural gas or compressed liquefied gas.  
27 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

1           Section 1. Section 32-9-20, Code of Alabama 1975, as  
2 last amended by Act 2015-325, 2015 Regular Session, is amended  
3 to read as follows:

4           "§32-9-20.

5           "(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to drive or  
6 move on any highway in this state any vehicle or vehicles of a  
7 size or weight except in accordance with the following:

8           "(1) WIDTH. Vehicles and combinations of vehicles,  
9 operating on highways with traffic lanes 12 feet or more in  
10 width, shall not exceed a total outside width, including any  
11 load thereon, of 102 inches, exclusive of mirrors or other  
12 safety devices approved by the State Transportation  
13 Department. The Director of the State Transportation  
14 Department may, in his or her discretion, designate other  
15 public highways for use by vehicles and loads with total  
16 outside widths not exceeding 102 inches, otherwise; vehicles  
17 and combinations of vehicles, operating on highways with  
18 traffic lanes less than 12 feet in width, shall not exceed a  
19 total outside width, including any load thereon, of 96 inches,  
20 exclusive of mirrors or other safety devices approved by the  
21 State Transportation Department. No passenger vehicle shall  
22 carry any load extending beyond the line of the fenders. No  
23 vehicle hauling forest products or culvert pipe on any highway  
24 in this state shall have a load exceeding 102 inches in width.

25           "(2) HEIGHT. No vehicle or semitrailer or trailer  
26 shall exceed in height 13 1/2 feet, including load.

1                   "(3) LENGTH. No vehicle shall exceed in length 40  
2 feet; except, that the length of a truck-semitrailer  
3 combination, semitrailers, including load, used in a truck  
4 tractor-semitrailer combination, shall not exceed 57 feet;  
5 semitrailers and trailers, including load, used in a truck  
6 tractor-semitrailer-trailer combination, shall not exceed 28  
7 1/2 feet each; and motor vehicles designed, used, or  
8 maintained primarily as a mobile dwelling, office, or  
9 commercial space, commonly called motor homes, shall not  
10 exceed 45 feet. Semitrailers exceeding 53 1/2 feet shall only  
11 be operated on highways designated pursuant to Section 32-9-1  
12 and shall only be operated when the distance between the  
13 kingpin of the semitrailer and the rearmost axle or a point  
14 midway between the two rear axles, if the two rear axles are  
15 tandem axles, does not exceed 41 feet and if the semitrailer  
16 is equipped with a rear underride guard of a substantial  
17 construction consisting of a continuous lateral beam extending  
18 to within four inches of the lateral extremities of the  
19 semitrailer and located not more than 22 inches from the  
20 surface as measured with the semitrailers empty and on a level  
21 surface. For purposes of enforcement of this subdivision,  
22 lengths of semitrailers and trailers refer to the cargo  
23 carrying portion of the unit. Truck tractor units used  
24 exclusively in combinations transporting motor vehicles may  
25 directly carry a portion of the cargo, provided that the  
26 combinations are restricted to truck tractor-semitrailer  
27 combinations only and provided further that the overall length

1 of these particular combinations shall not exceed 65 feet;  
2 except that the overall length of stinger-steered type units  
3 shall not exceed 75 feet. No truck tractor-semitrailer  
4 combination used exclusively for transporting motor vehicles  
5 shall carry any load extending more than three feet beyond the  
6 front or four feet beyond the rear of the combination. No  
7 other vehicle operated on a highway shall carry any load  
8 extending more than a total of five feet beyond both the front  
9 and rear, inclusive, of the vehicle.

10 "(4) WEIGHT.

11 "a. The gross weight imposed on the highway by the  
12 wheels of any one axle of a vehicle shall not exceed 20,000  
13 pounds, or such other weight, if any, as may be permitted by  
14 federal law to keep the state from losing federal funds;  
15 provided, that inadequate bridges shall be posted to define  
16 load limits.

17 "b. For the purpose of this section, an axle load  
18 shall be defined as the total load transmitted to the road by  
19 all wheels whose centers are included between two parallel  
20 transverse vertical planes 40 inches apart, extending across  
21 the full width of the vehicle.

22 "c. Subject to the limit upon the weight imposed  
23 upon the highway through any one axle as set forth herein, the  
24 total weight with load imposed upon the highway by all the  
25 axles of a vehicle or combination of vehicles shall not exceed  
26 the gross weight given for the respective distances between  
27 the first and last axle of the vehicle or combination of vehi-

1 cles, measured longitudinally to the nearest foot as set forth  
 2 in the following table:

3 "COMPUTED GROSS WEIGHT TABLE  
 4 "For various spacings of axle groupings

5 "Distance in feet between first Maximum load in  
 6 and last axles of vehicle or pounds on all the  
 7 combination of vehicles axles

		2 axles	3 axles	4 axles	5 axles	6 axles
8						
9	8 or	36,000	42,000	42,000		
10	less					
11	9	38,000	42,500	42,500		
12	10	40,000	43,500	43,500		
13	11		44,000	44,000		
14	12		45,000	50,000	50,000	
15	13		45,500	50,500	50,500	
16	14		46,500	51,500	51,500	
17	15		47,000	52,000	52,000	
18	16		48,000	52,500	58,000	58,000
19	17		48,500	53,500	58,500	58,500
20	18		49,500	54,000	59,000	59,000

1	19	50,000	54,500	60,000	60,000
2	20	51,000	55,500	60,500	66,000
3	21	51,500	56,000	61,000	66,500
4	22	52,500	56,500	61,500	67,000
5	23	53,000	57,500	62,500	68,000
6	24	54,000	58,000	63,000	68,500
7	25	54,500	58,500	63,500	69,000
8	26	56,000	59,500	64,000	69,500
9	27	57,000	60,000	65,000	70,000
10	28	59,000	60,500	65,500	71,000
11	29	60,000	61,500	66,000	71,500
12	30		62,000	66,500	72,000
13	31		63,500	67,000	72,500
14	32		64,500	68,000	73,500
15	33		65,000	69,000	74,000
16	34		65,500	70,000	74,500
17	35		66,500	71,000	75,000
18	36		67,000	72,000	76,000
19	37		68,000	73,000	77,000
20	38		69,000	74,000	78,000
21	39		70,000	75,000	79,000
22	40		71,000	76,000	80,000

1	41	72,000	77,000	81,000
2	42	73,000	78,000	82,000
3	43	74,000	79,000	83,000
4	44 and	75,000	80,000	84,000
5	over			

6           "Except as provided by special permits, no vehicle  
7 or combination of vehicles exceeding the gross weights  
8 specified above shall be permitted to travel on the public  
9 highways within the State of Alabama.

10           "No vehicle or combination of vehicles shall be per-  
11 mitted to operate on any portion of the Interstate Highway  
12 System of Alabama that shall have a greater weight than 20,000  
13 pounds carried on any one axle, including all enforcement tol-  
14 erances, or with a tandem axle weight in excess of 34,000  
15 pounds, including all enforcement tolerances, or with an over-  
16 all gross weight on a group of two or more consecutive axles  
17 produced by application of the following formula:

$$W=500 \quad LN \quad + \quad 12N \quad + \quad 36$$

$$N-1$$

20           where W = overall gross weight on any group of two  
21 or more consecutive axles to the nearest 500 pounds, L =  
22 distance in feet between the extreme of any group of two or



1 more consecutive axles, and N = number of axles in group under  
2 consideration; except, that two consecutive sets of tandem  
3 axles may carry a gross load of 34,000 pounds each, provided  
4 the overall distance between the first and last axles of the  
5 consecutive sets of tandem axles is 36 feet or more; provided,  
6 that the overall gross weight may not exceed 80,000 pounds,  
7 including all enforcement tolerances. Nothing in this section  
8 shall be construed as permitting size or weight limits on the  
9 National System of Interstate and Defense Highways in this  
10 state in excess of those permitted under 23 U.S.C. Section  
11 127. If the federal government prescribes or adopts vehicle  
12 size or weight limits greater than or less than those now  
13 prescribed by 23 U.S.C. Section 127 for the National System of  
14 Interstate and Defense Highways, the increased or decreased  
15 limits shall become effective on the National System of  
16 Interstate and Defense Highways in this state. Nothing in this  
17 section shall be construed to deny the operation of any  
18 vehicle or combination of vehicles that could be lawfully  
19 operated upon the highways and roads of this state on January  
20 4, 1975.

21 "d. For purposes of enforcement of this subdivision,  
22 all weights less than or equal to the sum of the weight  
23 otherwise prescribed by this subdivision, plus an additional  
24 weight to be calculated by multiplying the weight prescribed  
25 by this subdivision by one-tenth (.10) that shall represent a  
26 scale or enforcement tolerance, shall be deemed to be in  
27 compliance with the requirements of this section, and shall

1 not constitute violations thereof. No evidence shall be  
2 admitted into evidence or considered by the trier of fact in  
3 any civil action unless the evidence proffered would tend to  
4 prove that the weight of the vehicle exceeded the amount  
5 provided in this subsection. Nothing in this paragraph d.  
6 shall restrict or affect the right of any defendant to place  
7 in evidence such evidence tending to prove the defendant was  
8 in compliance with this section.

9 "e. Dump trucks, dump trailers, concrete mixing  
10 trucks, fuel oil, gasoline trucks, and trucks designated and  
11 constructed for special type work or use shall not be made to  
12 conform to the axle spacing requirements of paragraph (4)c of  
13 this section; provided, that the vehicle shall be limited to a  
14 weight of 20,000 pounds per axle plus scale tolerances; and,  
15 provided further, that the maximum gross weight of the  
16 vehicles shall not exceed the maximum weight allowed by this  
17 section for the appropriate number of axles, irrespective of  
18 the distance between axles, plus allowable scale tolerances.  
19 All axles shall be brake equipped. Trucks delivering asphalt  
20 plant mix which do not exceed the maximum allowable gross  
21 weight and operate within 50 miles of their home base shall  
22 not be required to conform to the requirements of paragraph  
23 (4)a of this section. Concrete mixing trucks which operate  
24 within 50 miles of their home base shall not be required to  
25 conform to the requirements of paragraph (4)a of this section;  
26 provided, that the vehicles shall be limited to a maximum load  
27 of the rated capacity of the concrete mixer, the true gross

1 load not to exceed 66,000 pounds, and all the vehicles shall  
2 have at least three axles, each with brake equipped wheels. It  
3 shall be a violation if the vehicles named under this  
4 subdivision travel upon bridges designated and posted by the  
5 Transportation Director as incapable of carrying the load.

6 "f. If the driver of any vehicle can comply with the  
7 weight requirements of this section by shifting or equalizing  
8 the load on all wheels or axles and does so when requested by  
9 the proper authority, the driver shall not be held to be  
10 operating in violation of this section.

11 "g. When portable scales are used in the enforcement  
12 of this section, the axles of any vehicle described or  
13 commonly referred to as tandem or triaxle rigs or units (that  
14 is, vehicles having two or more axles in addition to a  
15 steering axle), the group of tandem or triaxles shall be  
16 weighed simultaneously, and the total weight so derived shall  
17 be divided by the number of axles weighed in the group to  
18 arrive at the per axle weight, except that if any one axle in  
19 the group exceeds 20,000 pounds in weight, it shall not exceed  
20 the weight of any other axle in the group by more than 50  
21 percent. When portable scales are used to determine the weight  
22 of a vehicle pursuant to this section, the operator of the  
23 vehicle will be permitted to move the vehicle to the nearest  
24 platform scales certified by the Department of Agriculture and  
25 Industries and operated by a bonded operator within a distance  
26 of 10 highway miles, accompanied by an enforcement officer to  
27 verify the accuracy of the portable scales used in determining

1 the vehicle weight. If the weight of the vehicle is shown by  
2 the platform scales to be within the legal limits of this  
3 section, the operator of the vehicle shall not be held to be  
4 in violation of this section.

5 "h. The governing body of a county, by appropriate  
6 resolution, may authorize limitations less than those  
7 prescribed herein for vehicles operated upon the county  
8 highways of the county.

9 "i. The State Transportation Department may post or  
10 limit any road or bridge to weights less than those prescribed  
11 by this section. It is the legislative intent and purpose that  
12 this section be rigidly enforced by the State Transportation  
13 Department, the Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency and any  
14 other authorized law enforcement officers of the state, any  
15 county, or city and incorporated towns.

16 "j. Two and three axle vehicles being used  
17 exclusively for the purpose of transporting agricultural  
18 commodities or products to and from a farm and for  
19 agricultural purposes relating to the operation and  
20 maintenance of a farm by any farmer, custom harvester or  
21 husbandman may not be made to conform to the axle requirements  
22 of paragraph (4)a of this section or the gross weight  
23 requirements of paragraph (4)c of this section.

24 "(b) (1) Any vehicle utilizing an auxiliary power or  
25 idle reduction technology unit in order to promote reduction  
26 of fuel use and emissions because of engine idling shall be  
27 allowed an additional 400 pounds total to the gross, axle,

1 tandem, or bridge formula weight limits defined in this  
2 section.

3 "(2) To be eligible for the exception provided in  
4 this subsection, the operator of the vehicle must provide  
5 written proof or certification of the weight of the auxiliary  
6 power unit (APU) and demonstrate or certify the idle reduction  
7 technology is fully functional at all times.

8 "(3) Written proof or certification of the weight of  
9 the APU must be available to law enforcement officers if the  
10 vehicle is found in violation of applicable weight laws. The  
11 weight allowed cannot exceed 400 pounds or the actual weight  
12 proven or certified, whichever is less.

13 "(4) It is the intent of this subsection to apply at  
14 the state highway level the weight limit increase for vehicles  
15 using a functioning auxiliary power or idle reduction  
16 technology as provided in the Federal Energy Policy Act of  
17 2005.

18 "(c) (1) Any vehicle that primarily operates on  
19 compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas shall be  
20 allowed an additional 2,000 pounds to the gross, axle, tandem,  
21 or bridge formula weight limits provided in this section.

22 "(2) To be eligible for the extra weight allowance  
23 provided in this subsection, the operator of the vehicle must  
24 provide written proof or certification that the vehicle has an  
25 EPA certified natural gas engine or an EPA approved conversion  
26 unit installed on the vehicle which allows the vehicle to

1 primarily operate on compressed natural gas or liquefied  
2 natural gas and that the vehicle operates on such fuel."

3 Section 2. This act shall become effective on the  
4 first day of the third month following its passage and  
5 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.