

SUBJECT: Vehicle overweight permits

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, with amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Alexander, Bosse, Alonzo, Clemons, Edwards, Moreno, Siebert
0 nays
2 absent — Price, Uher

WITNESSES: For — Ben Boemer, Texas Grain and Feed Association
Against — None
On — Ron Hufford, Texas Forestry Association

BACKGROUND: The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) may issue overweight permits for commercial vehicles, truck tractors, trailers, semitrailers or combinations of those vehicles. These permits authorize operation of a vehicle that is overweight by up to 10 percent of its allowable axle weight and up to 5 percent of its allowable gross vehicle weight.

DIGEST: HB 1547 would specify that overweight permits issued by TxDOT would allow commercial vehicles, truck tractors, trailers, semitrailers, or combinations of those vehicles to exceed the allowable gross weight by the 5 percent gross vehicle tolerance allowance regardless of the weight on any one axle or distance between axles.

SUPPORTERS SAY: TxDOT determines the overall allowed weight of a truck based on the weight of the front axle alone. This procedure causes vehicles that have shifting cargoes — such as grain — to be penalized even if they are operating within permissible gross vehicle weight limits. HB 1547 would require that the weight on all of the truck's axles be considered.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition.

NOTES: The committee amendment added the phrase "or distance between axles."