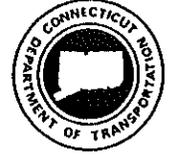




# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the  
Commissioner

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### Public Hearing – March 12, 2012 Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James P. Redeker  
Department of Transportation

#### H.B. 5460 – An Act Concerning Wreckers and Tow Trucks.

As written, H.B. 5460, AAC Wreckers and Tow Trucks appears to conform to existing permitting practices and compliance with federal regulations for the emergency towing of oversize/overweight vehicles. However, the Department is opposed to Section 2 of the bill which lowers the fees for certain emergency permits for a loss of approximately \$30,000.00 to the Department.

#### **Background**

Federal law establishes the maximum weight limits allowed for vehicles when operating on the Interstate System (i.e. I-95, I-84, etc.) - 80,000 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW). States are allowed to issue permits for the movement of non-divisible loads and vehicles exceeding the Federal maximum weight limits on the Interstates. The federal definition of "non-divisible" means:

..."any load or vehicle exceeding applicable length or weight limits which, if separated into smaller loads or vehicles would compromise the intended use of the vehicle, making it unable to perform the function for which it was intended; destroy the value of the load or vehicle, making it unusable for its intended purpose; or requires more than 8 work hours to dismantle using appropriate equipment". 23 CFR 658.5

Examples of non-divisible loads include dozers, excavators, boats, or bridge beams.

"Divisible loads" are bulk materials and raw products such as sand, gravel, milk, oil, and salt and federal law does not allow states to issue oversize/overweight permits on interstates.

#### **Emergency Situations/Moves**

Federal regulations allow States to issue special permits to wreckers and tow trucks that are responding to actual road emergencies, authorizing these vehicles to operate on the Interstate System in excess of the maximum weight limits only while responding to such emergencies. In an emergency situation, a wrecker may tow or haul a vehicle or combination of vehicles whether it is a divisible load or a non-divisible load. Emergencies are generally situations where a vehicle or combination of vehicles are either in an accident, became disabled and remain within the limits of a highway and removed by order of a traffic or law enforcement authority.

Currently, wreckers can apply for annual permits from ConnDOT for emergency situations that allow for the towing of divisible and non-divisible loads off of an interstate to their facility or storage yard. These permits are issued for a year and are valid 24 hours, 7 days per week. If a vehicle or combination of vehicles hauling a divisible or non-divisible load breaks down on the highway a wrecker with an annual permit may tow or haul a motor vehicle or combination of vehicles to the nearest licensed repair facility or motor carrier terminal of such vehicle. Once the towed vehicle reaches their shop, it is no longer considered an emergency. To move the vehicle to another location - be it a repair facility or the owners shop - a single trip permit is required to move a non-divisible load; a divisible load must be off loaded. This is in strict compliance with federal law and regulations. Failure to comply with federal law or regulations could result in the loss of federal funding

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato, Legislative Program Manager for ConnDOT at (860) 594-3013.