

HCS HB 542 -- AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

SPONSOR: Korman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS - Federal Mandate" by the Standing Committee on Transportation by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules - Administrative Oversight by a vote of 14 to 0.

This federal mandate bill makes changes to Missouri law to comply with the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act of 2015.

In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Changes definitions for specified terms including "automobile transporter," which is now defined as any vehicle combination capable of carrying cargo on the power unit and designed and used for the transport of assembled motor vehicles, including truck camper units; "backhaul" is the return trip of a vehicle transporting cargo or general freight, especially when carrying goods back over all or part of the same route; "Boat transporter," is any vehicle combination capable of carrying cargo on the power unit and designed and used specifically to transport assembled boats and boat hulls and boats may be partially disassembled to facilitate transporting; "towaway trailer transporter combination," is a combination of vehicles consisting of a trailer transporter towing unit and two trailers or semitrailers, with a total weight that does not exceed 26,000 pounds; and in which the trailers or semitrailers carry no property and constitute inventory property of a manufacturer, distributor, or dealer of such trailers or semitrailers; "trailer transporter towing unit," is a power unit that is not used to carry property when operating in a towaway trailer transporter combination;

(2) Changes the requirements for stinger-steered combination automobile transporters having a length not in excess of 85 may be operated on the interstate highways of this state and such other highways as may be designated by the commission for the operation of such vehicles plus a distance not to exceed 10 miles from such interstate or designated highway. All length provisions regarding stinger-steered automobile combination transporters are exclusive of front and rear overhang, which shall be no greater than a four-foot front overhang and no greater than a six-foot rear overhang;

(3) Allows automobile transporters to transport cargo or general freight on a backhaul, in compliance with weight limitations for a truck-tractor and semitrailer combination as outlined in Section 304.180, RSMo;

(4) Requires any towaway trailer transporter combination vehicle operated upon the interstate and designated primary highway system in this state to have an overall length of not more than 82 feet;

(7) Allows emergency vehicles designed to be used under emergency conditions to transport personnel and equipment and to mitigate hazardous situations to have a maximum gross vehicle weight of 86,000 pounds inclusive of 24,000 pounds on a single steering axle; 32,500 on a single drive axle; 62,000 on a tandem axle; or 52,000 on a tandem rear drive steer axle;

(8) Allows a vehicle operated by an engine fueled primarily by natural gas to operate on state highways in excess of the vehicle weight limits in these provisions by an amount that is equal to the difference between the weight of the vehicle attributable to the natural gas tank and fueling system carried by that vehicle and the weight of a comparable diesel tank and fueling system. The maximum gross vehicle weight of the vehicle operating with a natural gas engine shall not exceed 82,000 pounds; and

(9) Updates language to reflect the State Highways and Transportation Commission.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill is very narrowly drafted to comply with federal regulations so that Missouri is not in danger of federal withholding of up to \$60 million in annual highway funding. The bill will make it easier to transport large vehicles such as trucks using tractor trailers on the highway system.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Korman and MoDOT.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.