



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 245

February Session, 2024

Substitute Senate Bill No. 186

Senate, April 4, 2024

The Committee on Transportation reported through SEN. COHEN of the 12th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING WEIGHT TOLERANCE EXEMPTIONS FOR ELECTRIC COMMERCIAL VEHICLES AND CONCERNING THE REGISTRATION OF CERTAIN PICK-UP TRUCKS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) The owner of a commercial
2 motor vehicle that is powered primarily through the use of an electric
3 battery shall be granted a weight tolerance exemption of two thousand
4 pounds from the gross, total axle, total tandem or bridge formula weight
5 limits established by section 14-267a of the general statutes. Such
6 exemption shall be granted by any official or law enforcement officer
7 authorized to enforce the provisions of section 14-267a of the general
8 statutes.

9 Sec. 2. Subsection (e) of section 14-49 of the general statutes is
10 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
11 *1, 2024*):

12 (e) (1) For the registration of a passenger motor vehicle used in part

13 for commercial purposes, except any pick-up truck having a gross
 14 vehicle weight rating of less than twelve thousand five hundred
 15 pounds, the commissioner shall charge a triennial fee of one hundred
 16 thirty-two dollars and shall issue combination registration to such
 17 vehicle. Any individual who is sixty-five years of age or older may, at
 18 such individual's discretion, renew the combination registration of such
 19 vehicle owned by such individual for either a one-year period or the
 20 registration period as determined by the commissioner pursuant to
 21 subsection (a) of section 14-22. (2) For the registration of a school bus,
 22 the commissioner shall charge an annual fee of one hundred seven
 23 dollars for a type I school bus and sixty-four dollars for a type II school
 24 bus. (3) For the registration of a motor vehicle when used in part for
 25 commercial purposes and as a passenger motor vehicle or of a motor
 26 vehicle having a seating capacity greater than ten and not used for the
 27 conveyance of passengers for hire, the commissioner shall charge a
 28 biennial fee for gross weight as for commercial registration, as outlined
 29 in section 14-47, plus the sum of fourteen dollars and shall issue
 30 combination registration to such vehicle. (4) Each vehicle registered as
 31 combination shall be issued a number plate bearing the word
 32 "combination". No vehicle registered as combination may have a gross
 33 vehicle weight rating in excess of twelve thousand five hundred
 34 pounds. (5) For the registration of a pick-up truck having a gross vehicle
 35 weight rating of less than twelve thousand five hundred pounds that is
 36 not used in part for commercial purposes, the commissioner shall
 37 charge a triennial fee for gross weight as for commercial registration, as
 38 provided in section 14-47, plus the sum of twenty-one dollars [The
 39 commissioner may] and shall issue combination registration to such
 40 pick-up truck, except the commissioner shall issue passenger
 41 registration to any [such vehicle with] pick-up truck having a gross
 42 vehicle weight rating of eight thousand five hundred fifty pounds or
 43 less that is not used in part for commercial purposes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2024	New section

Sec. 2	October 1, 2024	14-49(e)
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Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 2(e)(5), ". The commissioner [may]" was changed to "[. The commissioner may] and shall issue combination registration to such pick-up truck, except the commissioner shall" for clarity.

TRA *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

Section 1 provides a weight tolerance exemption for electric commercial vehicles and does not have a fiscal impact.

Section 2 changes the thresholds by which pick-up trucks must be registered as either combination or passenger and does not have a fiscal impact because the fees are the same under either registration.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 186*****AN ACT ESTABLISHING WEIGHT TOLERANCE EXEMPTIONS FOR ELECTRIC COMMERCIAL VEHICLES AND CONCERNING THE REGISTRATION OF CERTAIN PICK-UP TRUCKS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill grants a weight tolerance exemption to primarily electric commercial motor vehicles driving on any road in the state, allowing them to exceed the state's various vehicle weight limits by up to 2,000 pounds. Among other things, this increases the general maximum gross weight for electric commercial vehicles from 80,000 pounds to 82,000 pounds. This exemption already applies to these vehicles when traveling on, or within reasonable access to, interstate highways (see BACKGROUND).

The bill also makes pick-up trucks with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 8,501 to 8,550 pounds eligible for a passenger registration if they are not used commercially. Currently, these pick-up trucks must be registered as combination vehicles. The bill's change potentially allows these pick-up trucks to access places that may limit access by commercial traffic or users, such as state parkways.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, for the electric commercial vehicle exemption and October 1, 2024, for the pick-up truck registration provision.

WEIGHT TOLERANCE EXEMPTION

The bill requires officials and law enforcement officers who are authorized to enforce the state's vehicle weight limit restrictions to grant a weight tolerance exemption of 2,000 pounds to any commercial motor

vehicle powered primarily by electric battery. The exemption applies to the gross, total axle, total tandem, and bridge formula weight limits. Under existing law, the maximum gross vehicle weight allowed on Connecticut roads without an overweight permit is generally 80,000 pounds (subject to the requirements of the federal bridge formula weight limit). Thus, the bill increases the maximum gross weight for electric commercial vehicles to 82,000 pounds.

The bill's exemption mirrors a federal exemption, which the state must already comply with for vehicles on interstate highways (see BACKGROUND). (Electric power units (i.e., truck tractors) on commercial vehicles are heavier than diesel powered units because of the weight of the battery. Subject to the same weight limits, electric powered tractor-trailers cannot carry as much cargo.)

PICK-UP TRUCK REGISTRATION

By law, pick-up trucks with a GVWR of 12,500 pounds or less that are not used for commercial purposes must be registered as combination vehicles, unless they fall at or under the GVWR threshold for pick-up truck passenger registration. (A combination registration is the type issued to vehicles that are used for both private passenger and commercial purposes.) The bill increases this threshold by 50 pounds from 8,500 to 8,550 pounds. It also requires, rather than allows, the motor vehicles commissioner to issue a passenger registration to qualifying pick-up trucks. As under existing law, pick-up trucks pay the same weight-based fee that applies to commercial vehicles, regardless of whether they are registered as passenger, combination, or commercial vehicles.

By requiring noncommercial pick-up trucks with a GVWR of 8,501 to 8,500 pounds to be registered as passenger vehicles, the bill potentially allows them to access roads or other places that limit access by commercial traffic. For example, vehicles with passenger registrations are generally permitted on state parkways (i.e., the Merritt, Wilbur Cross, and Milford Parkways), but state regulations prohibit vehicles with combination registrations and a gross weight above 7,500 pounds

from using state parkways (Conn. Agencies Regs., § 14-298-249(f)). Under the bill, these pick-up trucks may use the parkways regardless of the vehicle’s gross weight because they have passenger registrations.

BACKGROUND

Gross Vehicle Weight and Gross Vehicle Weight Rating

By law, gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) is the manufacturer-specified maximum loaded weight of a single or combination (articulated) vehicle. The GVWR of a combination vehicle is the GVWR of the power unit plus the GVWR of the towed units. “Gross weight” is a vehicle’s light weight (unloaded weight) plus the weight of its load. For tractor-trailers, gross weight is the light weight of the tractor and the trailer plus the weight of its load (CGS § 14-1(41) & (42)).

Federal Weight Exemption for Electric Commercial Vehicles

Federal law allows vehicles powered primarily by electric battery to exceed the weight limit on the power unit by up to 2,000 pounds, up to a maximum gross vehicle weight of 82,000 pounds (23 U.S.C. § 127(s)). Federal Highway Administration guidance specifies that, in addition to the gross weight limit, these vehicles may also exceed the limits on the power unit for the single axle, tandem axle, and federal bridge formula maximum weights, as long as the total gross vehicle weight is not over 82,000 pounds. The guidance further confirms that states must allow this additional weight for electric powered vehicles on the interstates and within reasonable access to the interstates.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 26 Nay 10 (03/18/2024)