

Committee Report

REGULAR CALENDAR

February 19, 2021

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The Committee on Transportation to which was referred HB 279,

AN ACT relative to the maximum allowable vehicle gross weight for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles. Having considered the same, report the same with the following amendment, and the recommendation that the bill OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT.

Rep. Judy Aron

FOR THE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE REPORT

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Committee: | Transportation |
| Bill Number: | HB 279 |
| Title: | relative to the maximum allowable vehicle gross weight for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles. |
| Date: | February 19, 2021 |
| Consent Calendar: | REGULAR |
| Recommendation: | OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT 2021-0319h |

STATEMENT OF INTENT

As amended this bill increases the maximum gross weight allowed on any truck/trailer combination that carries raw forestry products, such as unprocessed logs and wood chips, loaded on the log landing. This bill is a big benefit for the forest product industry because the tandem drive axle weight limit being requested in this bill is consistent with our neighboring states and other truck configuration axle limits. This bill is supported by the Department of Safety, the Timberland Owners Association, NH Farm Bureau, and the NH Motor Transport Association. The forest harvesting industry has spent a significant amount of time and resources trying to comply with the current statute and this change will allow them to continue to operate safely without being subjected to onerous regulations.

Vote 13-6.

Rep. Judy Aron
FOR THE COMMITTEE

Original: House Clerk
Cc: Committee Bill File

REGULAR CALENDAR

Transportation

HB 279, relative to the maximum allowable vehicle gross weight for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles. **OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT.**

Rep. Judy Aron for Transportation. As amended this bill increases the maximum gross weight allowed on any truck/trailer combination that carries raw forestry products, such as unprocessed logs and wood chips loaded on the log landing. This bill is a big benefit for the forest product industry because the tandem drive axle weight limit being requested in this bill is consistent with our neighboring states and other truck configuration axle limits. This bill is supported by the Department of Safety, the Timberland Owners Association, NH Farm Bureau, and the NH Motor Transport Association. The forest harvesting industry has spent a significant amount of time and resources trying to comply with the current statute and this change will allow them to continue to operate safely without being subjected to onerous regulations. **Vote 13-6.**

Amendment to HB 279

1 Amend the bill by replacing section 1 with the following:

2

3 1 Motor Vehicles; Maximum Gross Weight. Amend RSA 266:18-b, III(g) to read as follows:

4 (g) For a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles, the
5 weight on any single axle shall not exceed 22,400 pounds and the weight on any tandem axle shall
6 not exceed 36,000 pounds, and the weight of any tri-axle shall not exceed 54,000 pounds. ***For a***
7 ***combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles that is carrying***
8 ***raw forestry products, the weight on any tandem axle shall not exceed 40,000 pounds. For***
9 ***purposes of this subparagraph, "raw forestry products" means unprocessed logs and wood***
10 ***chips harvested from forestland, as defined in RSA 227-G:2, VIII, that have not previously***
11 ***been moved off site.***

Amendment to HB 279
- Page 2 -

2021-0319h

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill increases the maximum gross weight allowed on any tandem axle for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles that carries raw forestry products. The bill also defines "raw forestry products" for purposes of calculating maximum gross weight.

Voting Sheets

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

EXECUTIVE SESSION on

BILL TITLE: HB-279 relative to maximum allowable vehicle gross weight for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles

DATE: 2/19/21

LOB ROOM: 301-303

MOTION: (Please check one box)

- OTP
- ITL
- Retain (1st year)
- Adoption of Amendment # 0319h _____ (if offered)
- Interim Study (2nd year)

Moved by Rep. Arom _____ Seconded by Rep. Smith _____ Vote: 16-3 _____

MOTION: (Please check one box)

- OTP
- OTP/A
- ITL
- Retain (1st year)
- Adoption of Amendment # _____ (if offered)
- Interim Study (2nd year)

Moved by Rep. Aron _____ Seconded by Rep. Smith _____ Vote: 13-6 _____

MOTION: (Please check one box)

- OTP
- OTP/A
- ITL
- Retain (1st year)
- Adoption of Amendment # _____ (if offered)
- Interim Study (2nd year)

Moved by Rep. _____ Seconded by Rep. _____ Vote: _____

MOTION: (Please check one box)

- OTP
- OTP/A
- ITL
- Retain (1st year)
- Adoption of Amendment # _____ (if offered)
- Interim Study (2nd year)

Moved by Rep. _____ Seconded by Rep. _____ Vote: _____

CONSENT CALENDAR: _____ YES _____ NO

Minority Report? _____ Yes _____ No If yes, author, Rep: _____ Motion _____

Respectfully submitted: _____ Karel Crawford _____
Rep Karel Crawford, Clerk

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE HOUSE CLERK

1/22/2021 10:08:26 AM
Roll Call Committee Registers
Report



2021 SESSION

TRANSPORTATION

Bill #: HB-279 Motion: OTP AM #: 0319h Exec Session Date: 2/19/21

| <u>Members</u> | <u>YEAS</u> | <u>Nays</u> | <u>NV</u> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Walsh, Thomas C. Chairman | X | | |
| Gagne, Larry G. Vice Chairman Rep. Torosian | X | | |
| Crawford, Karel A. Clerk | X | | |
| Smith, Steven D. | X | | |
| Hill, Gregory G. | X | | |
| Aron, Judy F. | X | | |
| Ankarberg, Aidan | X | | |
| Gorski, Ted | X | | |
| O'Hara, Travis J. | X | | |
| Pitaro, Matthew Rep. True | X | | |
| Sykes, George E. | X | | |
| Cleaver, Skip J. | | X | |
| Fenton, Donovan W. Rep. Grasse | | X | |
| Pickering, Daniel R. | X | | |
| Rich, Cecilia | X | | |
| Telerski, Laura D. | X | | |
| Fox, Dru | | X | |
| Stevens, Deb | X | | |
| Veilleux, Daniel T. | X | | |
| TOTAL VOTE: | 16 | 3 | |

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE HOUSE CLERK

1/22/2021 10:08:26 AM
Roll Call Committee Registers
Report



2021 SESSION

TRANSPORTATION

Bill #: HB 279 **Motion:** OTP/A **AM #:** 0319h **Exec Session Date:** 2/19/21

| <u>Members</u> | <u>YEAS</u> | <u>Nays</u> | <u>NV</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Walsh, Thomas C. Chairman | X | | |
| Gagne, Larry G. Vice Chairman -Rep. Torosian | X | | |
| Crawford, Karel A. Clerk | X | | |
| Smith, Steven D. | X | | |
| Hill, Gregory G. | X | | |
| Aron, Judy F. | X | | |
| Ankarberg, Aidan | X | | |
| Gorski, Ted | X | | |
| O'Hara, Travis J. | X | | |
| Pitaro, Matthew Rep. True | X | | |
| Sykes, George E. | | X | |
| Cleaver, Skip J. | | X | |
| Fenton, Donovan W. Rep. Grasse | | X | |
| Pickering, Daniel R. | X | | |
| Rich, Cecilia | X | | |
| Telerski, Laura D. | | X | |
| Fox, Dru | | X | |
| Stevens, Deb | | X | |
| Veilleux, Daniel T. | X | | |
| TOTAL VOTE: | 13 | 6 | |

Rep. Pearl, Merr. 26
February 10, 2021
2021-0319h
11/04

Amendment to HB 279

1 Amend the bill by replacing section 1 with the following:

2

3 1 Motor Vehicles; Maximum Gross Weight. Amend RSA 266:18-b, III(g) to read as follows:

4 (g) For a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles, the
5 weight on any single axle shall not exceed 22,400 pounds and the weight on any tandem axle shall
6 not exceed 36,000 pounds, and the weight of any tri-axle shall not exceed 54,000 pounds. *For a*
7 *combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles that is carrying*
8 *raw forestry products, the weight on any tandem axle shall not exceed 40,000 pounds. For*
9 *purposes of this subparagraph, "raw forestry products" means unprocessed logs and wood*
10 *chips harvested from forestland, as defined in RSA 227-G:2, VIII, that have not previously*
11 *been moved off site.*

2021-0319h

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill increases the maximum gross weight allowed on any tandem axle for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles that carries raw forestry products. The bill also defines "raw forestry products" for purposes of calculating maximum gross weight.

Public Hearing

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC HEARING ON

BILL TITLE: HB – 279 relative to the maximum allowable vehicle gross weight for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles

DATE: 2/12/21

LOB ROOM: 301-303

Time Public Hearing Called to Order: 10:31 am

Time Adjourned: 11:04

Committee Members: Reps. Walsh, Gagne, Crawford, Smith, Hill, Aron, Ankarberg, Gorski, O'Hara, Pitaro, Sykes, Cleaver, Fenton, Pickering, Rich, Telerski, Fox, Stevens and Veilleux Rep. Newman

**Bill Sponsors:
Rep Pearl**

TESTIMONY

- Use asterisk if written testimony and/or amendments are submitted.

*Rep. Pearl sent an amendment 2021-0319h this would put us in line with Maine The 44,000 would solve the problem.

Jason Stock supports the bill NH Timberland Owners Association Tractor Trailer cert. 99,000 pounds, axel weights 36,000 pounds, doesn't make sense to be traveling across states you are legal in Maine not legal in NH and legal in VT.

Robert Sculley – support NHMTA small segment of the trucking industry in forest products industry

*David Rodrigue DOT opposed to the bill higher axel do damage of bridges. And roads 7700 hours to look into the change in the law

Q – Rep. Gorski – How many bridges would it affect A. dozen

Q - Rep. Sykes: Would you have presser to repair the roads A. yes

NH State Police Bill Burke – Are the trucks able to carry this weight safely? A Yes

Rep. Newman taking Rep. Rich place

House Remote Testify

Transportation Committee Testify List for Bill HB279 on 2021-02-12

Support: 6 Oppose: 1 Neutral: 1 Total to Testify: 4

[Export to Excel](#)

| <u>Name</u> | <u>City, State</u> <u>Email Address</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Representing</u> | <u>Position</u> | <u>Testifying</u> | <u>Non-Germane</u> | <u>Signed Up</u> |
|---------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Rodrigue, David | David.M.Rodrigue@dot.nh.gov | State Agency Staff | Department of Transportation | Oppose | Yes (5m) | No | 2/11/2021 1:04 PM |
| Stock, Jasen | jstock@nhtoa.org | A Lobbyist | NH Timberland Owners Association | Support | Yes (4m) | No | 2/8/2021 8:34 AM |
| Sculley, Robert | rjsculley@nhmta.org | A Lobbyist | NHMTA | Support | Yes (3m) | No | 2/11/2021 11:54 AM |
| Peters, Errol | landaff@juno.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Support | Yes (2m) | No | 2/11/2021 8:43 AM |
| Hennessey, Erin | erin.hennessey@leg.state.nh.us | An Elected Official | SD1 | Support | No | No | 2/3/2021 2:11 PM |
| Rathbun, Eric | ericrathbun@gmail.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Neutral | No | No | 2/12/2021 6:45 AM |
| Pearl, Howard | Howard.pearl@leg.state.nh.us | An Elected Official | Merrimack 26 prime sponsor | Support | No | No | 2/12/2021 8:10 AM |
| Johnson, II, Robert | robj@nhfarmbureau.org | A Lobbyist | NH Farm Bureau Federation | Support | No | No | 2/12/2021 8:43 AM |

Testimony

Archived: Monday, July 19, 2021 9:04:23 AM
From: [Conor Callahan](#)
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 9:24:32 AM
To: [~House Transportation Committee](#)
Subject: HB 279
Importance: Normal

Chairman Walsh and Members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Conor Callahan, VP of Procurement for Kennebec Lumber Company. We currently own and operate 6 different wood processing sites in Greenfield, Grantham, Springfield, Rumney, Wentworth and Tamworth NH. I just wanted to send a quick note in my support of House Bill 279 and the need for this amendment within our industry. Brining the tandem axle weight to 40,000 pounds would only "follow-suit" with the NH weight limits of a tri-axle at 60,000 pounds and a single axle at 22,000 pounds. The fiber industry in New England is facing a severe downturn in low grade markets and pricing. The proposed amendment in HB 279 will help maximize their load and reduce material cost for transportation purposes. HB 279's proposal will only help those who are currently battling the low-grade crisis we are all immersed in and provide a more consistent "playing field" when comparing axle weights to Maine and Vermont.

Regards,



Kennebec Lumber
Company
P.O. Box 288
105 South Main Street
Solon, ME 04979

Conor Callahan

Kennebec Lumber Company
V.P. of Procurement

Office: 207-643-2110

Direct: 207-643-0211

Cell: 207-614-4011

fax: 207-643-2113

Conorc@kennebeclumber.com

www.kennebeclumber.com

www.mainetraditionsflooring.com

Archived: Monday, July 19, 2021 9:04:23 AM
From: Joyce Rose
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 2:42:10 PM
To: ~House Transportation Committee
Subject: HB 279
Importance: Normal

Representative Thomas Walsh, Chairman
NH House of Representatives Transportation Committee
New Hampshire Legislative Office Building, Room 203
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Committee Members,

HB 279 proposes an increase of the tandem axle weight limit from 36,000# to 40,000#. One of the many difficulties of transporting natural products like wood, in different forms such as chips or logs, is having an unknown, uneven distribution of the load weight. Wood is often loaded by an operator on the landing, into a chip van or on to a log body. It is very difficult to determine how the weight of the wood is dispersed within the chip van or log body but a driver will easily recognize an overweight load. This bill will alleviate this technicality of axle overweight so truckers can focus on total load weight, safety and driving. The bill will also make NH limits more consistent with neighboring states which will make interstate trucking more feasible.

Please consider helping our forest industry move products from the land to the mills in a more reasonable but responsible way.

Sincerely,

Joyce Rose

Chuck Rose Inc.
100 Chase Farm Rd
Hopkinton, NH 03229

Archived: Monday, July 19, 2021 9:04:23 AM
From: landaff@juno.com
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 5:27:21 PM
To: ~House Transportation Committee; jstock@nhtoa.org
Subject: HB 279
Importance: Normal

Representative Thomas Walsh, Chairman
N.H. House of Representatives Transportation Committee
New Hampshire Legislative Office Building, Room 203
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Mr. Walsh and committee members

My name is Errol Peters of Landaff, NH. My son and I own a logging business in Northern Grafton County. We are self sufficient as we cut and transport our on products from the woods to the mill.

I am writing to ask you and the Transportation Committee to support HB 279 for a number of reasons. I was on the conference call network, but when called I could not get through. I could hear the proceeding perfectly.

First a little history as I understand it. The 34,000 lb axle weight limit was established by FMSCA with a maximum truck weight of 80,000 lbs. New Hampshire now allows us a 99,000 lb load limit if our truck and trailer meet certain criteria - size of axles, tire size and ply, brakes, frame, wheel spacing, etc. We have to be certified by a approved facility before we are allowed to register for the additional weight. In another words the State has approved us to be a safe vehicle.

We are not asking for more weight, just the chance to haul what we are allowed legally. With a legal load and a 40,000 lb rear axle limit I can travel in Vermont, who has a even greater axle limit, New Hampshire and Maine, whose limit is slightly more without worrying about be stopped and checked . I have been stopped and weighed in NH and had a legal gross load but was over axle. Then 6-7 miles further along after I crossed the border into Maine I was weighed again. I was legal all around. To me this is absurd. The roads and bridges are the safety equipment to our vehicles so we can haul this size load safely

I understand the Dot's concern. However, if their tri-axle axle weight limit when they vehicles were actually weighed many would not comply with the 34,000 lb axle limit. I am not talking about when they are doing emergency work, such as plowing and sanding. Just routine work. I understand the trucks hauling salt are well over all limits.

The Department of Safety testified that this additional weight would not make NH highways any more dangerous. The certified trucks have added numerous additions to haul these loads safely. I think they do a excellent job of trying to keep NH"S roads safe

For these reasons I would encourage you to report HB 279 out of committee as" OUGHT TO PASS."

Thank you taking the time to listen to me.

Errol S. Peters
222 West End Road
Landaff, NH 03585

Archived: Monday, July 19, 2021 9:04:24 AM
From: landaff@juno.com
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 5:27:21 PM
To: ~House Transportation Committee; jstock@nhtoa.org
Subject: HB 279
Importance: Normal

Representative Thomas Walsh, Chairman
N.H. House of Representatives Transportation Committee
New Hampshire Legislative Office Building, Room 203
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Mr. Walsh and committee members

My name is Errol Peters of Landaff, NH. My son and I own a logging business in Northern Grafton County. We are self sufficient as we cut and transport our on products from the woods to the mill.

I am writing to ask you and the Transportation Committee to support HB 279 for a number of reasons. I was on the conference call network, but when called I could not get through. I could hear the proceeding perfectly.

First a little history as I understand it. The 34,000 lb axle weight limit was established by FMSCA with a maximum truck weight of 80,000 lbs. New Hampshire now allows us a 99,000 lb load limit if our truck and trailer meet certain criteria - size of axles, tire size and ply, brakes, frame, wheel spacing, etc. We have to be certified by a approved facility before we are allowed to register for the additional weight. In another words the State has approved us to be a safe vehicle.

We are not asking for more weight, just the chance to haul what we are allowed legally. With a legal load and a 40,000 lb rear axle limit I can travel in Vermont, who has a even greater axle limit, New Hampshire and Maine, whose limit is slightly more without worrying about be stopped and checked . I have been stopped and weighed in NH and had a legal gross load but was over axle. Then 6-7 miles further along after I crossed the border into Maine I was weighed again. I was legal all around. To me this is absurd. The roads and bridges are the safety equipment to our vehicles so we can haul this size load safely

I understand the Dot's concern. However, if their tri-axle axle weight limit when they vehicles were actually weighed many would not comply with the 34,000 lb axle limit. I am not talking about when they are doing emergency work, such as plowing and sanding. Just routine work. I understand the trucks hauling salt are well over all limits.

The Department of Safety testified that this additional weight would not make NH highways any more dangerous. The certified trucks have added numerous additions to haul these loads safely. I think they do a excellent job of trying to keep NH'S roads safe

For these reasons I would encourage you to report HB 279 out of committee as " OUGHT TO PASS."

Thank you taking the time to listen to me.

Errol S. Peters
222 West End Road
Landaff, NH 03585

Archived: Monday, July 19, 2021 9:04:24 AM
From: [Pete Howland](#)
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 4:52:15 PM
To: [Thomas Walsh](#); [~House Transportation Committee](#)
Subject: HB 279
Importance: Normal

GOOD AFTERNOON,

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON HB 279, AS A RETIRED PROCUREMENT FORESTER FOR TWO DIFFERENT SAWMILLS DURING MY FIFTY YEAR CAREER IN THE WOOD INDUSTRY.

I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR A COMPANY TRUCKING FLEET AT ONE OF THEM AND HAVE ALWAYS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUB-CONTRACTED TRUCKERS FROM THE VARIOUS LOGGING OPERATIONS THAT I RAN IN MAINE , NEW HAMPSHIRE AND VERMONT.

THE FIRST COMPANY THAT I WORKED FOR WAS ONE OF THE ONES INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING THE SIX (6) AXLE WEIGHTS TO 99,000 LBS. WITH THE 10 PER CENT OVER FACTOR, IN NEW HAMPSHIRE AND IN MAINE. WHICH WE ADHERED TO WHEN TRUCKING VARIOUS FOREST PRODUCTS. THE BIGGEST FLAW IN THE LAWS WERE THAT THE DRIVE AXLE WEIGHTS AREN'T CONSISTENT FROM STATE TO STATE. MOST OF THE TRUCKS TODAY THAT HAUL FOREST PRODUCTS ARE SPEC'D WITH MINIMUM 44,000 LB. TANDEM DRIVE AXLES, FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS.

GETTING NEW HAMPSHIRE TO 40,000LBS. WITH 10 PERCENT OVER GETS US TO 44,000 LBS., WHICH IS WHAT MOST TRUCKS ARE BUILT TOO. THIS WILL GET US CONSISTENT TO MAINE AND CLOSER TO VERMONT.

THIS PROPOSED NEW LAW WOULD BE A BIG BENEFIT FOR THE FOREST PRODUCT INDUSTRY BASICALLY, BECAUSE THE 36,000LB. DRIVE TANDEM AXLE WEIGHT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO HIT. IT IS COMMON FOR TRUCKS TO MEET THE GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT LIMIT OF 99,000 LBS, YET THE TANDEM DRIVE AXLE WEIGHT LIMITS DON'T EVEN COME CLOSE.

THE TANDEM DRIVE AXLE WEIGHT LIMIT BEING REQUESTED IN HB 279 IS CONSISTENT WITH NEIGHBORING STATES AND OTHER TRUCK CONFIGURATION

AXLE LIMITS – A TRI-AXLE LOG TRUCK CAN HAVE THE TRI-AXLE UNIT WEIGH 60,000 LBS.

AS FOR SAFETY, ALL TRUCKS WILL BE RUNNING THE SAME AS THEY HAVE FOR THE PAST 20 PLUS YEARS, IT ONLY MAKES IT CONSISTENT WITH THE TRUCK MANUFACTURING OF TODAY. THEY ARE SAFER AND MORE STABLE WITH THE HEAVIER RATED DRIVE AXLES.


IF DOT HAS A CONCERN ABOUT THE BRIDGE SAFETY, MAYBE THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN INSPECTING THEM MORE THOROUGHLY AND ADDRESSING THEIR CONCERNS INSTEAD OF PROMOTING BICYCLE PATHS, STATEWIDE WITH THE MONEY THEY HAVE COLLECTED FROM THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY THAT SHOULD HAVE GONE FOR BRIDGE AND ROAD MAINTENANCE. THAT SOUNDS TO ME MORE LIKE A POLITICAL AND MANAGEMENT PROBLEM WITHIN THE DOT !!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

PETE

--

Pete Howland
P.O. Box 2291
Conway, New Hampshire
03818-2291
(c) 603-455-6389
petehowland47@gmail.com

Archived: Monday, July 19, 2021 9:04:24 AM
From: [Rodrigue, David](#)
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 1:07:20 PM
To: [~House Transportation Committee](#)
Subject: NH House Remote Testify: 10:00 am - HB279 in House Transportation
Importance: Normal
Attachments:
[hb 279 testimony.pdf](#) 

Thank you.

Please work safely, wear a mask and wash your hands....

Dave

David Rodrigue, PE
NHDOT Director of Operations
603.271.1486
David.M.Rodrigue@dot.nh.gov

TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

WRD 2-17-21

REGARDING HB 279 MY NAME IS
RICHARD D. LEWIS AND MY DAUGHTER'S NAME
IS DONNA L. COOPER. TOGETHER WE OWN
CHESTER FOREST PROD. INC IN CHESTER N.H.

THIS BILL ADDRESSES A PROBLEM FOR TRUCKERS
IN THE FOREST PROD. INDUSTRY. OUR SISTER STATES
HAVE 40,000 LB OR HIGHER 2 AXLE LIMITS NOW.
N.H. HAS LOST MANY OF ITS MARKETS FOR WOOD
PRODUCTS IN THE LAST 2 YRS. BIOMASS, LOW GRADE
WOOD.

A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF NH WOOD MOVES
ACROSS STATE LINES AND INT. BORDERS
HB 279 BRINGS N.H. LIMITS ON PAR.

SINGLE OR 2 AXLE TRUCKS, TRACTOR TRAILERS
2 AXLE AND SINGLE AXLE TRAILERS ARE AT
22,000 LB PER AXLE NOW.

IT IS SAFE TO HAVE MORE WEIGHT ON DRIVE
AXLES IN SLIPPERY CONDITIONS BETTER TRACTION.

LOG TRUCKERS FROM C.F.P.I. GOING TO MAINE ARE
GETTING 2 TICKETS IF OVERLOADED
1-OVERWEIGHT AND 1-OVER AXLE RESULT 2-FINES
IT IS OVER AXLE ON DRIVE TIRES EVERY TIME.

TRUCKS ARE LOADED IN BAD CONDITIONS AT
TIMES GIVING ON BOARD SCALES INACCURATE
READING

RESPECTFULLY
Richard D. Lewis



- SELECTIVE CUTTING
- FOREST MANAGEMENT
- COMPLETE SITE WORK
- FIELD & PASTURE DEVELOPMENT
- PURCHASING OF STANDING TIMBER
- CHIPPING & STUMPING

February 17, 2021

Representative Thomas Walsh, Chairman
N.H. House of Representatives Transportation Committee
New Hampshire Legislative Office Building, Room 203
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB279

Dear Chairman Walsh,

We are writing to express Hopkinton Forestry and Land Clearing, Inc's support for NH HB 279. We have been targeted by the State and have received threats of suspension of our fleet registration due to current overweight on axle regulations. We face certain challenges due to how we load trucks on log landings. These include uneven ground, soft ground and blowing chips into chip vans. We can reasonably hit the gross vehicle weight limits, but the axle limits are much more difficult due the challenges mentioned previously.

We believe that NH axle weights should be consistent with Maine, which is 44,000# and Vermont, which is over 50,000#. HB279 will make interstate trucking easier. In addition, NH roads and bridges are comparable to our neighboring states. It is unclear why HB 279 will cause the NH DOT to spend 7,700 hours reassessing all the bridges in the state. They should be assessing all the bridges already.

We also believe HB279 will impact a small percentage of the trucks on the road. Hopkinton Forestry and Land Clearing, Inc. has an average of four trucks daily hauling logs and chips off landings. These vehicles have axle ratings which can safely handle the proposed change to 40,000#. The increased axle weight this bill imposes is consistent with legal axle weight limits for smaller vehicles (RSA 26618-a.I.(c)1 which states -- 22,400 # per axle on 3-axle single unit vehicles and on all other vehicles with axles 10 feet or more apart, including combination vehicles")

According to the NH Dept. of Safety testimony, HB279 will not make NH's highways more dangerous. Hopkinton Forestry & Land Clearing, Inc. hopes that the passage of HB279 will help alleviate the unfair focus of NH Dept. of Safety upon the forestry industry.

Respectfully Yours,

David Herrick *Marlo Herrick*

David & Marlo Herrick
Owners of Hopkinton Forestry & Land Clearing, Inc.



THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Victoria F. Sheehan
Commissioner

William Cass, P.E.
Assistant Commissioner

February 11, 2021

The Honorable Thomas Walsh, Chair
House Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 203
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Re: House Bill 279 relative vehicle gross weights

Dear Transportation Committee Chairman Walsh:

HB 279 proposes a change to NH RSA 266:18-b **Weight on Non-Interstate and General Highway System for Vehicles with additional registrations**. HB 279 would provide a carve out for forest products, allowing a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles that is carrying forest products, to increase the weight on any tandem axle from 36,000 lbs. to 40,000 lbs. This equates to an increase of 11%.

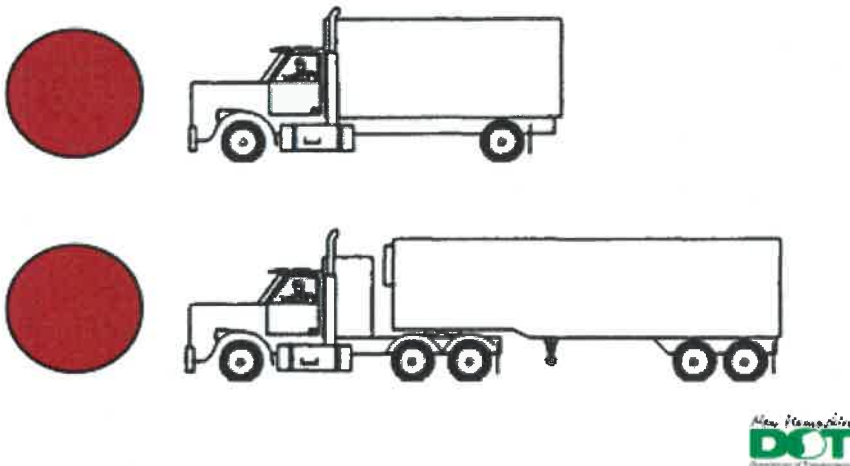
NH Department of Transportation opposes this Bill. Passage of this House Bill will impact the posting of bridges in NH, erode safety factors and increase the deterioration of existing bridges and roadway pavements. We also have concern that this could lead to demand for similar treatment from other industries. These are divisible loads and should be held to consistent limits currently set forth in statute. NH Laws restrict the weight of vehicles for two major reasons. The first reason the laws limit weights is vehicles are designed and built to safely carry a finite weight. Distribution of that weight to different axles affects steering, breaking, stability, and other safety characteristics as well as the overall ability of the vehicle to carry those loads. NH Department of Safety is the expert on these factors. The second reason the laws limit weights is that our roads and bridges are engineered to support specific loads from the vehicles. NH Department of Transportation is the expert on these factors.

NH's roadway network is comprised of a series of roads including state and local, highways and back roads. Our Interstates are relatively modern, with highly engineered roadways and bridges. They are also more highly regulated when it comes to weight to protect the Federal taxpayer's significant investment and to preserve the Nation's ability to move commerce and defense assets across the country uninterrupted. NH RSA Section 266:18-b exercises NH's choice to increase the allowable weight of vehicles on NH's non-Interstate system that is not as tightly regulated from a Federal level. Unfortunately, while some of the non-Interstate system is made up of highly engineered roadways and bridges, much of this system is made up of roadways that have never been formally engineered or constructed. Many of the state and local bridges on the non-interstate system are old, and were built to carry much lighter vehicles than travel over them today. The load increase proposed in HB 279 will have the greatest effect on our shorter, older bridges which were designed for lower loading standards, and on the pavement on our state and local roads that were never formally constructed.

Fortunately NHDOT has a sophisticated bridge inspection program and the ability to rate all of our state and local bridges for specific loads. The Department posts State bridges and directs Towns to post their bridges that cannot support specific loads. Passage of HB 279 would require the Department to spend approximately 7,700 hours to reanalyze and rate all of the State's bridges for these proposed higher axle weights, and as a result this will almost certainly lead to the posting of additional bridges increasing the number of E-2 postings. The following graphic explains the E-2 posting. The E-2 posting prohibits all Certified (the vehicles defined in NH RSA 266:18-d) from crossing the posted bridge. Passage of this Bill will prohibit all certified vehicles from these additional posted bridges, not just trucks carrying forest products.

E-2 Bridge Posting

E-2: This sign prohibits both Certified Single Unit and Certified Combination Vehicles from crossing the bridge.



In addition to posting bridges, heavier loads on bridges increase stresses and deflections. These increased “load effects” promote accelerated deterioration of concrete bridge decks by way of micro-cracking which allows rapid infiltration of potential salt-laden roadway runoff. Bridge decks are responsible for smoothly carrying traffic while protecting the underlying structural components from moisture and de-icing chemicals. With bridge decks deteriorating more rapidly, it can be expected that these heavier loads will have a negative impact on the expected service life of many bridges in the inventory.

These heavier loads also contribute to pavement cracking, rutting and ride quality. Trucks in general have an exponentially, to the fourth power, higher equivalent infrastructure damage. This damage is caused by the heavier per axle weight. In this case a relatively small 11% increase in weight would cause approximately 1.5 times the damage to roadway structure.

Finally this Bill proposes a carve out, or exception for a specific industry. Forest products, like milk, maple syrup, sand, gravel and many other products are “divisible loads” simply meaning they can be divided to meet the weight restrictions of any law.

If this bill passes a heavier load allows a reduction in the number of trips made, leading to a cost savings for the forest industry. The overall added cost in damage to the infrastructure and additional hauling time for all certified loads due to additional E-2 posted bridges will lead to increases in trip length and increased associated costs for certified haulers across all industries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line.

David Rodrigue
NHDOT Director of Operations

cc: William Cass, Assistant Commissioner
Elizabeth Bielecki, Director, Division of Motor Vehicles
Lieutenant Andrew Player, NH State Police, Troop G Commander
Kathleen Mulcahey-Hampson

Bill as
Introduced

HB 279 - AS INTRODUCED

2021 SESSION

21-0450
11/06

HOUSE BILL **279**

AN ACT relative to the maximum allowable vehicle gross weight for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles.

SPONSORS: Rep. Pearl, Merr. 26; Rep. Lang, Belk. 4; Rep. Moffett, Merr. 9; Rep. Crawford, Carr. 4; Sen. Hennessey, Dist 1

COMMITTEE: Transportation

ANALYSIS

This bill increases the maximum gross weight allowed on any tandem axle for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles that carries forest products.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struck through~~].
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

21-0450
11/06

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty One

AN ACT relative to the maximum allowable vehicle gross weight for a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 Motor Vehicles; Maximum Gross Weight. Amend RSA 266:18-b, III(g) to read as follows:

(g) For a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles, the weight on any single axle shall not exceed 22,400 pounds and the weight on any tandem axle shall not exceed 36,000 pounds, and the weight of any tri-axle shall not exceed 54,000 pounds. ***For a combination of truck-tractor and single semi-trailer with 4 or more axles that is carrying forest products, the weight on any tandem axle shall not exceed 40,000 pounds.***

2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.