

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007**

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**SENATE BILL 1456
Commerce, Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee Substitute Adopted
5/9/07
House Committee Substitute Favorable 5/31/07**

Short Title: Tandem Vehicle Operations on Highways.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 26, 2007

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ALLOW CERTAIN TANDEM VEHICLE COMBINATIONS TO
OPERATE ON HIGHWAYS WITHIN THE STATE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 20-116(e) reads as rewritten:

"(e) Except as provided by G.S. 20-115.1, no combination of vehicles coupled together shall consist of more than two units and no such combination of vehicles shall exceed a total length of 60 feet inclusive of front and rear bumpers, subject to the following exceptions: Motor vehicle combinations of one semitrailer of not more than 48 feet in length and a truck tractor (power unit) may exceed the 60-foot maximum length. Said length limitation shall not apply to vehicles operated in the daytime when transporting poles, pipe, machinery or other objects of a structural nature which cannot readily be dismembered, nor to such vehicles transporting such objects operated at nighttime by a public utility when required for emergency repair of public service facilities or properties, but in respect to such night transportation every such vehicle and the load thereon shall be equipped with a sufficient number of clearance lamps on both sides and marker lamps upon the extreme ends of said projecting load to clearly mark the dimensions of such load: Provided that vehicles designed and used exclusively for the transportation of motor vehicles shall be permitted an overhang tolerance front or rear not to exceed five feet. Provided, that wreckers may tow a truck, combination tractor and trailer, trailer, or any other disabled vehicle or combination of vehicles to a place for repair, parking, or storage within 50 miles of the point where the vehicle was disabled and may tow a truck, tractor, or other replacement vehicle to the site of the disabled vehicle. Provided, however, that a combination of a house trailer used as a mobile home, together with its towing vehicle, shall not exceed a total length of 55 feet exclusive of front and rear bumpers. Provided further, that the said limitation that no combination of vehicles coupled together shall consist of more than two units shall not

1 apply to trailers not exceeding three in number drawn by a motor vehicle used by
2 municipalities for the removal of domestic and commercial refuse and street rubbish,
3 but such combination of vehicles shall not exceed a total length of 50 feet inclusive of
4 front and rear bumpers. Provided further, that the said limitation that no combination of
5 vehicles coupled together shall consist of more than two units shall not apply to a
6 combination of vehicles coupled together by a saddle mount device used to transport
7 motor vehicles in a driveway service when no more than three saddle mounts are used
8 and provided further, that equipment used in said combination is approved by the safety
9 regulations of the Federal Highway Administration and the safety rules of the
10 Department of Crime Control and Public Safety."

11 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 20-115.1(f) reads as rewritten:

12 "(f) Motor vehicle combinations operating pursuant to this section shall have
13 reasonable access between (i) highways on the interstate system (except those exempted
14 by the United States Secretary of Transportation pursuant to 49 USC § 2311(i) and 49
15 USC § 2316(e)) and other qualifying federal-aid highways as designated by the United
16 States Secretary of Transportation and (ii) terminals, facilities for food, fuel, repairs, and
17 rest and points of loading and unloading by household goods carriers and by any truck
18 tractor-semitrailer combination in which the semitrailer has a length not to exceed 28
19 1/2 feet and a width not to exceed 102 inches as provided in subsection (c) of this
20 section and which generally operates as part of a vehicle combination described in
21 subsection (a) of this section. The North Carolina Department of Transportation may, on
22 streets and highways on the State highway system, and any municipality may, on streets
23 and highways on the municipal street system, impose reasonable restrictions based on
24 safety considerations on any truck tractor-semitrailer combination in which the
25 semitrailer has a length not to exceed 28 1/2 feet and which generally operates as part of
26 a vehicle combination described in subsection (a) of this section. "Reasonable access" to
27 facilities for food, fuel, repairs and rest shall be deemed to be those facilities which are
28 located within three road miles of the interstate or designated highway. The Department
29 of Transportation is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations providing for
30 "reasonable access." The Department may approve reasonable access routes for one
31 particular type of STAA (Surface Transportation Assistance Act) dimensioned vehicle
32 when significant, substantial differences in their operating characteristics exist."

33 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 20-115.1(g) reads as rewritten:

34 "(g) Under certain conditions, and after consultation with the Joint Legislative
35 Commission on Governmental Operations, the North Carolina Department of
36 Transportation may designate State highway system roads in addition to those highways
37 designated by the United States Secretary of Transportation for use by the vehicle
38 combinations authorized in this section. Such designations by the Department shall only
39 be made under the following conditions:

- 40 (1) A determination of the public convenience and need for such
41 designation;
- 42 (2) A traffic engineering study which clearly shows the road proposed to
43 be designated can safely accommodate and has sufficient capacity to
44 handle these vehicle combinations; and

1 (3) A public hearing is held or the opportunity for a public hearing is
2 provided in each county through which the designated highway passes,
3 after two weeks notice posted at the courthouse and published in a
4 newspaper of general circulation in each county through which the
5 designated State highway system road passes, and consideration is
6 given to the comments received prior to the designation.

7 (4) The Department may designate routes for one particular type of STAA
8 (Surface Transportation Assistance Act) dimensioned vehicle when
9 significant, substantial differences in their operating characteristics
10 exist.

11 No portion of the State highway system within municipal corporate limits may be
12 designated by the Department without concurrence by the municipal governing body.
13 Also, the Department may not designate any portion of the State highway system that
14 has been deleted or exempted by the United States Secretary of Transportation based on
15 safety considerations. For the purpose of this section, any highway designated by the
16 Department shall be deemed to be the same as a federal-aid primary highway designated
17 by the United States Secretary of Transportation pursuant to 49 USC § 2311 and 49
18 USC § 2316, and the vehicle combinations authorized in this section shall be permitted
19 to operate on such highway."

20 **SECTION 4.** This act is effective when it becomes law.