

1 SB55  
2 186425-2  
3 By Senator Allen  
4 RFD: Transportation and Energy  
5 First Read: 07-FEB-17  
6 PFD: 02/06/2017

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3  
4 ENGROSSED

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7 A BILL  
8 TO BE ENTITLED  
9 AN ACT

10  
11 To amend Section 32-9-20, Code of Alabama 1975, as  
12 last amended by Act 2016-190, 2016 Regular Session, relating  
13 to the restrictions on the operation of certain motor  
14 vehicles; to further provide for the length of certain  
15 vehicles; and to allow for weight increases for vehicles  
16 having conversion equipment installed that allows the vehicle  
17 to operate on compressed natural gas or compressed liquefied  
18 gas.

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

20 Section 1. Section 32-9-20, Code of Alabama 1975, as  
21 last amended by Act 2016-190, 2016 Regular Session, is amended  
22 to read as follows:

23 "§32-9-20.

24 "(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to drive or  
25 move on any highway in this state any vehicle or vehicles of a  
26 size or weight except in accordance with the following:

1           "(1) WIDTH. Vehicles and combinations of vehicles,  
2 operating on highways with traffic lanes 12 feet or more in  
3 width, shall not exceed a total outside width, including any  
4 load thereon, of 102 inches, exclusive of mirrors or other  
5 safety devices approved by the State Transportation  
6 Department. The Director of the State Transportation  
7 Department may, in his or her discretion, designate other  
8 public highways for use by vehicles and loads with total  
9 outside widths not exceeding 102 inches, otherwise; vehicles  
10 and combinations of vehicles, operating on highways with  
11 traffic lanes less than 12 feet in width, shall not exceed a  
12 total outside width, including any load thereon, of 96 inches,  
13 exclusive of mirrors or other safety devices approved by the  
14 State Transportation Department. No passenger vehicle shall  
15 carry any load extending beyond the line of the fenders. No  
16 vehicle hauling forest products or culvert pipe on any highway  
17 in this state shall have a load exceeding 102 inches in width.

18           "(2) HEIGHT. No vehicle or semitrailer or trailer  
19 shall exceed in height 13 1/2 feet, including load.

20           "(3) LENGTH. No vehicle shall exceed in length 40  
21 feet; except, that the length of a truck-semitrailer  
22 combination, semitrailers, including load, used in a truck  
23 tractor-semitrailer combination, shall not exceed 57 feet;  
24 semitrailers and trailers, including load, used in a truck  
25 tractor-semitrailer-trailer combination, shall not exceed 28  
26 1/2 feet each; and motor vehicles designed, used, or  
27 maintained primarily as a mobile dwelling, office, or

1 commercial space, commonly called motor homes, shall not  
2 exceed 45 feet. Semitrailers exceeding 53 1/2 feet shall only  
3 be operated on highways designated pursuant to Section 32-9-1  
4 and shall only be operated when the distance between the  
5 kingpin of the semitrailer and the rearmost axle or a point  
6 midway between the two rear axles, if the two rear axles are  
7 tandem axles, does not exceed 41 feet and if the semitrailer  
8 is equipped with a rear underride guard of a substantial  
9 construction consisting of a continuous lateral beam extending  
10 to within four inches of the lateral extremities of the  
11 semitrailer and located not more than 22 inches from the  
12 surface as measured with the semitrailers empty and on a level  
13 surface. For purposes of enforcement of this subdivision,  
14 lengths of semitrailers and trailers refer to the cargo  
15 carrying portion of the unit. Truck tractor units used  
16 exclusively in combinations transporting motor vehicles may  
17 directly carry a portion of the cargo, provided that the  
18 combinations are restricted to truck tractor-semitrailer  
19 combinations only and provided further that the overall length  
20 of these particular combinations shall not exceed 65 feet;  
21 except that the overall length of stinger-steered type units  
22 shall not exceed ~~75~~ 80 feet. No truck tractor-semitrailer  
23 combination used exclusively for transporting motor vehicles  
24 shall carry any load extending more than ~~three~~ four feet  
25 beyond the front or ~~four~~ six feet beyond the rear of the  
26 combination. No other vehicle operated on a highway shall

1 carry any load extending more than a total of five feet beyond  
2 both the front and rear, inclusive, of the vehicle.

3 "(4) WEIGHT.

4 "a. The gross weight imposed on the highway by the  
5 wheels of any one axle of a vehicle shall not exceed 20,000  
6 pounds, or such other weight, if any, as may be permitted by  
7 federal law to keep the state from losing federal funds;  
8 provided, that inadequate bridges shall be posted to define  
9 load limits.

10 "b. For the purpose of this section, an axle load  
11 shall be defined as the total load transmitted to the road by  
12 all wheels whose centers are included between two parallel  
13 transverse vertical planes 40 inches apart, extending across  
14 the full width of the vehicle.

15 "c. Subject to the limit upon the weight imposed  
16 upon the highway through any one axle as set forth herein, the  
17 total weight with load imposed upon the highway by all the  
18 axles of a vehicle or combination of vehicles shall not exceed  
19 the gross weight given for the respective distances between  
20 the first and last axle of the vehicle or combination of vehi-  
21 cles, measured longitudinally to the nearest foot as set forth  
22 in the following table:

23 COMPUTED GROSS WEIGHT TABLE

24 For various spacings of axle groupings

	Distance in feet between first and last axles of vehicle or combination of vehicles	Maximum load in pounds on all the axles				
		2 axles	3 axles	4 axles	5 axles	6 axles
4						
5	8 or	36,000	42,000	42,000		
6	less					
7	9	38,000	42,500	42,500		
8	10	40,000	43,500	43,500		
9	11		44,000	44,000		
10	12		45,000	50,000	50,000	
11	13		45,500	50,500	50,500	
12	14		46,500	51,500	51,500	
13	15		47,000	52,000	52,000	
14	16		48,000	52,500	58,000	58,000
15	17		48,500	53,500	58,500	58,500
16	18		49,500	54,000	59,000	59,000
17	19		50,000	54,500	60,000	60,000
18	20		51,000	55,500	60,500	66,000
19	21		51,500	56,000	61,000	66,500
20	22		52,500	56,500	61,500	67,000
21	23		53,000	57,500	62,500	68,000

1	24	54,000	58,000	63,000	68,500
2	25	54,500	58,500	63,500	69,000
3	26	56,000	59,500	64,000	69,500
4	27	57,000	60,000	65,000	70,000
5	28	59,000	60,500	65,500	71,000
6	29	60,000	61,500	66,000	71,500
7	30		62,000	66,500	72,000
8	31		63,500	67,000	72,500
9	32		64,500	68,000	73,500
10	33		65,000	69,000	74,000
11	34		65,500	70,000	74,500
12	35		66,500	71,000	75,000
13	36		67,000	72,000	76,000
14	37		68,000	73,000	77,000
15	38		69,000	74,000	78,000
16	39		70,000	75,000	79,000
17	40		71,000	76,000	80,000
18	41		72,000	77,000	81,000
19	42		73,000	78,000	82,000
20	43		74,000	79,000	83,000
21	44 and		75,000	80,000	84,000
22	over				

1           "Except as provided by special permits, no vehicle  
2 or combination of vehicles exceeding the gross weights  
3 specified above shall be permitted to travel on the public  
4 highways within the State of Alabama.

5           "No vehicle or combination of vehicles shall be per-  
6 mitted to operate on any portion of the Interstate Highway  
7 System of Alabama that shall have a greater weight than 20,000  
8 pounds carried on any one axle, including all enforcement tol-  
9 erances, or with a tandem axle weight in excess of 34,000  
10 pounds, including all enforcement tolerances, or with an over-  
11 all gross weight on a group of two or more consecutive axles  
12 produced by application of the following formula:

$$W=500 \quad LN \quad + \quad 12N \quad + \quad 36$$
$$N-1$$

15           where W = overall gross weight on any group of two  
16 or more consecutive axles to the nearest 500 pounds, L =  
17 distance in feet between the extreme of any group of two or  
18 more consecutive axles, and N = number of axles in group under  
19 consideration; except, that two consecutive sets of tandem  
20 axles may carry a gross load of 34,000 pounds each, provided  
21 the overall distance between the first and last axles of the  
22 consecutive sets of tandem axles is 36 feet or more; provided,  
23 that the overall gross weight may not exceed 80,000 pounds,



1 including all enforcement tolerances. Nothing in this section  
2 shall be construed as permitting size or weight limits on the  
3 National System of Interstate and Defense Highways in this  
4 state in excess of those permitted under 23 U.S.C. Section  
5 127. If the federal government prescribes or adopts vehicle  
6 size or weight limits greater than or less than those now  
7 prescribed by 23 U.S.C. Section 127 for the National System of  
8 Interstate and Defense Highways, the increased or decreased  
9 limits shall become effective on the National System of  
10 Interstate and Defense Highways in this state. Nothing in this  
11 section shall be construed to deny the operation of any  
12 vehicle or combination of vehicles that could be lawfully  
13 operated upon the highways and roads of this state on January  
14 4, 1975.

15 "d. For purposes of enforcement of this subdivision,  
16 all weights less than or equal to the sum of the weight  
17 otherwise prescribed by this subdivision, plus an additional  
18 weight to be calculated by multiplying the weight prescribed  
19 by this subdivision by one-tenth (.10) that shall represent a  
20 scale or enforcement tolerance, shall be deemed to be in  
21 compliance with the requirements of this section, and shall  
22 not constitute violations thereof. No evidence shall be  
23 admitted into evidence or considered by the trier of fact in  
24 any civil action unless the evidence proffered would tend to  
25 prove that the weight of the vehicle exceeded the amount  
26 provided in this subsection. Nothing in this paragraph d.  
27 shall restrict or affect the right of any defendant to place

1 in evidence such evidence tending to prove the defendant was  
2 in compliance with this section.

3 "e. Dump trucks, dump trailers, concrete mixing  
4 trucks, fuel oil, gasoline trucks, and trucks designated and  
5 constructed for special type work or use shall not be made to  
6 conform to the axle spacing requirements of paragraph (4)c of  
7 this section; provided, that the vehicle shall be limited to a  
8 weight of 20,000 pounds per axle plus scale tolerances; and,  
9 provided further, that the maximum gross weight of the  
10 vehicles shall not exceed the maximum weight allowed by this  
11 section for the appropriate number of axles, irrespective of  
12 the distance between axles, plus allowable scale tolerances.  
13 All axles shall be brake equipped. Trucks delivering asphalt  
14 plant mix which do not exceed the maximum allowable gross  
15 weight and operate within 50 miles of their home base shall  
16 not be required to conform to the requirements of paragraph  
17 (4)a of this section. Concrete mixing trucks which operate  
18 within 50 miles of their home base and do not exceed the  
19 maximum allowable gross weight shall not be required to  
20 conform to the requirements of paragraph (4)a of this section.  
21 It shall be a violation if the vehicles named under this  
22 subdivision travel upon bridges designated and posted by the  
23 Transportation Director as incapable of carrying the load.

24 "f. If the driver of any vehicle can comply with the  
25 weight requirements of this section by shifting or equalizing  
26 the load on all wheels or axles and does so when requested by

1 the proper authority, the driver shall not be held to be  
2 operating in violation of this section.

3 "g. When portable scales are used in the enforcement  
4 of this section, the axles of any vehicle described or  
5 commonly referred to as tandem or triaxle rigs or units (that  
6 is, vehicles having two or more axles in addition to a  
7 steering axle), the group of tandem or triaxles shall be  
8 weighed simultaneously, and the total weight so derived shall  
9 be divided by the number of axles weighed in the group to  
10 arrive at the per axle weight, except that if any one axle in  
11 the group exceeds 20,000 pounds in weight, it shall not exceed  
12 the weight of any other axle in the group by more than 50  
13 percent. When portable scales are used to determine the weight  
14 of a vehicle pursuant to this section, the operator of the  
15 vehicle will be permitted to move the vehicle to the nearest  
16 platform scales certified by the Department of Agriculture and  
17 Industries and operated by a bonded operator within a distance  
18 of 10 highway miles, accompanied by an enforcement officer to  
19 verify the accuracy of the portable scales used in determining  
20 the vehicle weight. If the weight of the vehicle is shown by  
21 the platform scales to be within the legal limits of this  
22 section, the operator of the vehicle shall not be held to be  
23 in violation of this section.

24 "h. The governing body of a county, by appropriate  
25 resolution, may authorize limitations less than those  
26 prescribed herein for vehicles operated upon the county  
27 highways of the county.

1            "i. The State Transportation Department may post or  
2 limit any road or bridge to weights less than those prescribed  
3 by this section. It is the legislative intent and purpose that  
4 this section be rigidly enforced by the State Transportation  
5 Department, the Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency and any  
6 other authorized law enforcement officers of the state, any  
7 county, or city and incorporated towns.

8            "j. Two and three axle vehicles being used  
9 exclusively for the purpose of transporting agricultural  
10 commodities or products to and from a farm and for  
11 agricultural purposes relating to the operation and  
12 maintenance of a farm by any farmer, custom harvester or  
13 husbandman may not be made to conform to the axle requirements  
14 of paragraph (4)a of this section or the gross weight  
15 requirements of paragraph (4)c of this section.

16            "(b) (1) Any vehicle utilizing an auxiliary power or  
17 idle reduction technology unit in order to promote reduction  
18 of fuel use and emissions because of engine idling shall be  
19 allowed an additional 400 pounds total to the gross, axle,  
20 tandem, or bridge formula weight limits defined in this  
21 section.

22            "(2) To be eligible for the exception provided in  
23 this subsection, the operator of the vehicle must provide  
24 written proof or certification of the weight of the auxiliary  
25 power unit (APU) and demonstrate or certify the idle reduction  
26 technology is fully functional at all times.

1           "(3) Written proof or certification of the weight of  
2 the APU must be available to law enforcement officers if the  
3 vehicle is found in violation of applicable weight laws. The  
4 weight allowed cannot exceed 400 pounds or the actual weight  
5 proven or certified, whichever is less.

6           "(4) It is the intent of this subsection to apply at  
7 the state highway level the weight limit increase for vehicles  
8 using a functioning auxiliary power or idle reduction  
9 technology as provided in the Federal Energy Policy Act of  
10 2005.

11           "(c) (1) Any motor vehicle, if operated by an engine  
12 fueled primarily by natural gas, may exceed any vehicle weight  
13 limit (up to a maximum gross vehicle weight of 82,000 pounds)  
14 under this section by an amount that is equal to the  
15 difference between:

16           "a. the weight of the vehicle attributable to the  
17 natural gas tank and fueling system carried by that vehicle;  
18 and

19           "b. the weight of a comparable diesel tank and  
20 fueling system.

21           "(2) This subsection shall apply on federal  
22 interstate highways to the weight limit increases for vehicles  
23 using an EPA certified natural gas engine or an EPA approved  
24 conversion unit installed on the vehicle which allows the  
25 vehicle to operate primarily on compressed natural gas or  
26 liquefied natural gas."

1                   Section 2. This act shall become effective on the  
2 first day of the third month following its passage and  
3 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

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Senate

Read for the first time and referred to the Senate  
committee on Transportation and Energy..... 07-FEB-17

Read for the second time and placed on the calen-  
dar 1 amendment..... 09-FEB-17

Read for the third time and passed as amended .... 09-MAY-17

Yeas 22  
Nays 2

Patrick Harris,  
Secretary.