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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- SIZE, WEIGHT, AND LOAD LIMITS

Introduced By: Senators Felag, DiPalma, Lauria, Raptakis, Tikoian, Sosnowski, and Euer

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 31-25-21 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-25 entitled "Size,  
2 Weight, and Load Limits" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **31-25-21. Power to permit excess size or weight of loads.**

4 (a) The department of transportation, with respect to highways under its jurisdiction, may,  
5 in its discretion, upon application in writing and good cause being shown for it, approve the  
6 issuance of a special permit in writing authorizing the applicant to operate or move a vehicle, or  
7 combination of vehicles, of a size or weight of vehicle or load exceeding eighty thousand pounds  
8 (80,000 lbs.) or otherwise not in conformity with the provisions of chapters 1 — 27 of this title  
9 upon any highway under the jurisdiction of the party granting the permit and for the maintenance  
10 of which the party is responsible. Permits that have been issued for a full year shall not be required  
11 to be renewed for the period of time for which payment has been made and the application and  
12 other required documentation has been completed and filed. Provided, that neither the department  
13 of transportation nor the local authorities may approve the issuance of permits for divisible loads  
14 weighing in excess of the limits set by the director of the department of transportation by and  
15 through the rules and regulations promulgated by the department of transportation entitled "rules  
16 and regulations regarding overweight and oversize vehicle permits".

17 (1) Provided, however, that for milk products, any vehicle carrying fluid milk products  
18 shall be considered a load that cannot be easily dismantled or divided.

19 (b) The director of the department of transportation may enter into agreements with other

1 states, the District of Columbia, and Canadian provinces providing for the reciprocal enforcement  
2 of the overweight or over-dimensional vehicle permit laws of those jurisdictions entering into the  
3 agreement.

4 (c) Single trip non-divisible permit fee. A fee of forty dollars (\$40.00) shall be paid to the  
5 department of transportation for the issuance of each non-divisible single trip permit. Upon  
6 approval of the application, the department of transportation shall provide the approved permit. The  
7 driver must possess the permit and documentation as required by the permit at all times.

8 (d) Annual ~~construction equipment~~ blanket permit fee. An annual fee of four hundred  
9 dollars (\$400) paid to the department of transportation shall exempt the payor from the necessity  
10 of paying single trip permit fees for non-divisible construction equipment loads, boats, or marine  
11 assets of less than one hundred thirty thousand pounds (130,000 lbs.) as found in subsection (c).  
12 However, payment of the fee shall not be deemed to authorize noncompliance with the rules and  
13 regulations promulgated by the department of transportation entitled "rules and regulations  
14 regarding overweight and oversize vehicle permits".

15 (e) Blanket ~~construction equipment~~ permits may be issued, as determined by the  
16 department of transportation, for intrastate movement of non-divisible construction equipment  
17 loads, boats or marine assets upon payment of the fee set forth in subsection (d). If used in  
18 conjunction with an annual divisible load permit, the limits and requirements of the blanket  
19 ~~construction equipment~~ permit shall supersede the requirements of the divisible ~~load~~ permit. The  
20 driver must possess both permits and all required documentation. The duration of the blanket permit  
21 may not exceed one year. The ~~construction equipment~~ blanket permit load shall be limited to a  
22 minimum overall length of fifty-five feet (55'), a maximum overall length of eighty feet (80'), a  
23 maximum width of twelve feet four inches (12' 4"), a maximum gross weight of one hundred thirty  
24 thousand pounds (130,000 lbs.), and a maximum axle weight of twenty-five thousand pounds  
25 (25,000 lbs.); provided, that the department of transportation, with respect to highways under its  
26 jurisdiction, may, in its discretion and upon application and for good cause shown, approve the  
27 issuance of a single trip non-divisible permit authorizing the applicant to exceed one hundred thirty  
28 thousand pounds (130,000 lbs.) for non-divisible loads. A flashing amber light shall be in operation  
29 above the highest point of the vehicle and shall be visible from both the front and rear of the vehicle;  
30 and signs and red warning flags shall be affixed to all extremities. All blanket permits issued in  
31 accordance with this section shall be effective during daylight and night-time hours for all over-  
32 dimensional moves made and travel shall be allowed on state highways.

33 (f) Permission to travel is always subject to weather and road conditions. The following  
34 restrictions on travel times shall apply to all vehicles over eight feet six inches (8' 6") wide, over

1 eighty feet (80') long, or over one hundred thirty thousand pounds (130,000 lbs.):

2 (1) Freeways and arterial roadways.

3 No travel will be allowed between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. or between 3:00  
4 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

5 (2) [Deleted by P.L. 2022, ch. 178, § 1 and P.L. 2022, ch. 179, § 1.]

6 (3) Holidays.

7 Memorial Day, Victory Day, Labor Day, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Columbus  
8 Day — No Saturday, Sunday, or Monday day or night travel.

9 Thanksgiving Day — No travel on Wednesday through Sunday of Thanksgiving week in  
10 any calendar year.

11 Independence Day, Veterans Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day — No day or night  
12 travel and no travel the previous night.

13 Easter Sunday. No Saturday night or Sunday travel.

14 (4) Violations of this section are subject to fines enumerated in § 31-25-24.

15 (g) ~~Construction equipment blanket~~ Blanket permits shall not be granted for travel over the  
16 following bridges:

17 Blackstone River Viaduct 750 carrying I-295 northbound and southbound over the  
18 Blackstone River;

19 Kingston Road Bridge No. 403 carrying I-95 northbound and southbound over Kingston  
20 Road.

21 (h) Travel of blanket ~~permitted construction equipment~~ permits through zones with  
22 reductions in lane width such as construction zones will not be allowed. Prior to travel, blanket  
23 permit holders are responsible to verify the location of construction zones and lane width  
24 reductions. Locations of lane width reduction zones are available through the state department of  
25 transportation's construction office.

26 (i) Upon approval of the annual ~~construction equipment~~ blanket permit application, the  
27 department of transportation shall provide the approved permit. The driver must possess the permit  
28 and documentation as required by the permit at all times.

29 (j) Any carrier or persons found to be operating without a required permit, or in excess of  
30 their permit limits, three (3) times within a one-year period shall be revoked of their ability to use  
31 and receive permits within the state for up to thirty (30) days. Additional violations shall result in  
32 revocation of up to ninety (90) days.

33 (k) Operation of any vehicle in excess of the requirements of any permit shall void that  
34 permit and result in the imposition of fines as provided in this chapter.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
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1           This act would allow boats and marine assets to utilize the overweight oversize annual  
2 blanket permit, that was in effect until 2022, when it was no longer allowed. It would also allow  
3 for the resumption of the prior practice, which was outlawed, of permitting for boats and marine  
4 asset transportation.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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