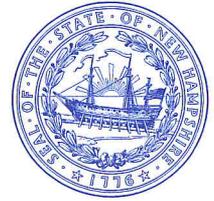




The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

March 12, 2013

The Honorable Jim Rausch, Chairman, and Members of the Committee
Senate Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 103
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 196 – relative to weight of commercial vehicles with idle reduction devices

Dear Chairman Rausch and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Environmental Services (DES) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 196, which proposes increasing the weight exemption for idle reduction technologies, thereby further promoting the use of such technology in commercial vehicles, resulting in reduced fuel use and emissions.

Heavy duty trucks, and in particular long haul trucks, tend to idle for long periods of time for a number of reasons. Some drivers are subject to mandatory rest periods and engines are idled to maintain cabin comfort. Others have refrigeration units that operate off the main engine, requiring it to run even when the truck is stationary. Idling trucks burn as much as one gallon of fuel per hour and emit high levels of particulate and smog forming emissions that impact the health of our citizens and our environment.

The advent of idle reduction technology in recent years has made much of this idling avoidable. However, idle reduction units typically add several hundred pounds to the weight of a vehicle. Under current New Hampshire law up to 400 pounds of this additional weight is exempt from inclusion in the weight limit of the vehicle. The recent federal MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century) authorization modified the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Part 658.17 to increase the weight of idle reduction units to be exempted from the vehicle weight on the National System of Interstate and Defense Highway to 550 pounds.

In New Hampshire, heavy duty trucks account for a disproportionate percentage of the state's particulate and smog forming pollutants. As a relatively rural state, a stationary infrastructure that would allow long haul truckers to turn off their vehicles during their mandatory rest stops, such as electrified truck stops, has not offered a good economic return for facility owners and therefore has not been developed. Additionally, many truckers take their rest periods at locations other than commercial truck stops. On-board idle reduction technology allows truckers operating anywhere in the state to reduce idling, thereby saving fuel and reducing air pollution.

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Currently, four other New England states allow additional weight for idle reduction technology either through state statute or state policy. Many other Northeast states (e.g. New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia) also allow for this weight exemption.

We urge you to pass this legislation because it will help create certainty for the trucking industry and encourage investment in idle reduction technology, thereby reducing diesel engine emissions, conserving fuel, and saving money that can be reinvested in the economy. Should you have further questions or need additional information please feel free to contact me (271-2958, Thomas.burack@des.nh.gov) or Rebecca Ohler (271-6749, rebecca.ohler@des.nh.gov).

Sincerely,


for Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Sponsors

Commissioner John Barthelmes, DOS
Asst. Commission Earl Sweeney, DOS