

**Introduced by Senator Karnette**

February 22, 2002

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An act to amend Section 35401 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 2072, as introduced, Karnette. Vehicles: trucks: length.

Existing law requires the Department of Transportation to study the maximum kingpin-to-rear axle length sustainable on highways or portions of highways, and to erect suitable signs accordingly.

This bill would require the department to update its 1989 report entitled "Truck Kingpin-to-Rear Axle Length State Highway System Evaluation" by January 1, 2004, and to update it each year thereafter.

The bill would require the department to publish and make available to the public a listing of the highways or portions of highways identified as having reduced maximum kingpin-to-rear axle length limits based on the updated report and its annual updates.

The bill would require the Department of the California Highway Patrol to investigate any accident involving the operation of a combination of vehicles that occurs on a highway or portion of highway listed in the specified publication to determine whether there was a violation of the reduced maximum kingpin-to-rear axle length limits.

The bill would require the Director of Transportation, by March 1, 2004, to submit to the Legislature recommendations for establishing regulations pursuant to the findings of the updated study.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section 35401 of the Vehicle Code is amended  
2 to read:

3 35401. (a) Except as provided in subdivisions (b), (c), and  
4 (d), no combination of vehicles coupled together, including any  
5 attachments, shall exceed a total length of 65 feet.

6 (b) (1) A combination of vehicles coupled together, including  
7 any attachments, which consists of a truck tractor, a semitrailer,  
8 and a semitrailer or trailer, shall not exceed a total length of 75 feet,  
9 if the length of neither the semitrailers nor the trailer in the  
10 combination of vehicles exceeds 28 feet 6 inches.

11 (2) A B-train assembly is excluded from the measurement of  
12 semitrailer length when used between the first and second  
13 semitrailers of a truck tractor-semitrailer-semitrailer combination  
14 of vehicles. However, if there is no second semitrailer mounted to  
15 the B-train assembly, it shall be included in the length  
16 measurement of the semitrailer to which it is attached.

17 (c) A tow truck in combination with any of the following  
18 vehicles authorized to travel on the highway by this chapter is  
19 exempt from subdivision (a) when operating under a valid annual  
20 transportation permit and within a 100 mile radius of the location  
21 specified in the permit:

- 22 (1) A disabled vehicle.
- 23 (2) An abandoned vehicle.
- 24 (3) A disabled or abandoned combination of vehicles.

25 A tow truck in combination with the above vehicles may exceed  
26 the 100-mile radius restriction if a single trip permit is obtained  
27 from the Department of Transportation.

28 (d) Any city or county may, by ordinance, prohibit a  
29 combination of vehicles of a total length in excess of 60 feet upon  
30 highways under its respective jurisdiction. The ordinance shall not  
31 be effective until appropriate signs are erected indicating either the  
32 streets affected by the ordinance or the streets not affected, as the  
33 local authority determines will best serve to give notice of the  
34 ordinance.

35 (e) Any city or county, upon a determination that a highway or  
36 portion of highway under its jurisdiction cannot, in consideration  
37 of public safety, sustain the operation of trailers or semitrailers of  
38 the maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distances permitted under



1 Section 35400, may, by ordinance, establish lesser distances  
2 consistent with the maximum distances that the highway or  
3 highway portion can sustain, except that a city or county shall not  
4 restrict the kingpin to rearmost axle measurement to less than 38  
5 feet on those highways or highway portions. Any city or county  
6 considering the adoption of an ordinance shall consider, but not be  
7 limited to, consideration of, all of the following:

8 (1) A comparison of the operating characteristics of the  
9 vehicles to be limited as compared to operating characteristics of  
10 other vehicles regulated by this code.

11 (2) Actual traffic volume.

12 (3) Frequency of accidents.

13 (4) Any other relevant data.

14 In addition, the city or county may appoint an advisory  
15 committee consisting of local representatives of those interests  
16 which are likely to be affected and shall consider the  
17 recommendations of the advisory committee in adopting the  
18 ordinance. The ordinance shall not be effective until appropriate  
19 signs are erected indicating the highways or highway portions  
20 affected by the ordinance.

21 This subdivision shall only become operative upon the adoption  
22 of an enabling ordinance by a city or county.

23 ~~(f) Whenever, in the judgment of the Department of  
24 Transportation, any state highway cannot, in consideration of  
25 public safety, sustain the operation of trailers or semitrailers of the  
26 maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distances permitted under  
27 Section 35400, the director, in consultation with the Department  
28 of the California Highway Patrol, shall compile data on total traffic  
29 volume, frequency of use by vehicles covered by this subdivision,  
30 accidents involving these vehicles, and other relevant data to  
31 assess whether these vehicles are a threat to public safety and  
32 should be excluded from the highway or highway segment. The  
33 study, containing the conclusions and recommendations of the  
34 director, shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Business,  
35 Transportation and Housing Agency. Unless otherwise notified by  
36 the secretary, the director shall hold public hearings in accordance  
37 with the procedures set forth in Article 3 (commencing with  
38 Section 35650) of Chapter 5 for the purpose of determining the  
39 maximum kingpin to rear axle length, which shall be not less than  
40 38 feet, that the highway or highway segment can sustain without~~



1 ~~unreasonable threat to the safety of the public. Upon the basis of~~  
2 ~~the findings, the Director of Transportation shall declare in writing~~  
3 ~~the maximum kingpin to rear axle lengths which can be maintained~~  
4 ~~with safety upon the highway.—(1) The Department of~~  
5 *Transportation, in consultation with the Department of the*  
6 *California Highway Patrol, shall update its 1989 report entitled*  
7 *“Truck Kingpin-to-Rear Axle Length State Highway System*  
8 *Evaluation” to reflect any changes to state highways that would*  
9 *limit or increase the maximum vehicle length that the highways can*  
10 *safely accommodate. The updated study, containing the*  
11 *conclusions and recommendations of the director, shall be*  
12 *submitted to the Secretary of the Business, Transportation and*  
13 *Housing Agency. Unless otherwise notified by the secretary, the*  
14 *Director of Transportation shall hold public meetings for the*  
15 *purpose of determining the maximum kingpin-to-rear axle length*  
16 *that a highway or highway segment can sustain without*  
17 *unreasonable threat to the safety of the public. Upon the basis of*  
18 *the findings, the director shall declare in writing the maximum*  
19 *kingpin-to-rear axle lengths that can be maintained with safety*  
20 *upon the highway or portion of the highway. Following the*  
21 *declaration of maximum lengths as provided by this subdivision,*  
22 *the Department of Transportation shall erect suitable signs at each*  
23 *end of the affected portion of the highway and at any other points*  
24 *that the Department of Transportation determines to be necessary*  
25 *to give adequate notice of the length limits.*

26 ~~The Department of Transportation, in consultation with the~~  
27 ~~Department of the California Highway Patrol, shall compile traffic~~  
28 ~~volume, geometric, and other relevant data, to assess the~~  
29 ~~maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distance of vehicle~~  
30 ~~combinations appropriate for those state highways or portion of~~  
31 ~~highways, affected by this section, that cannot safely~~  
32 ~~accommodate trailers or semitrailers of the maximum kingpin to~~  
33 ~~rearmost axle distances permitted under Section 35400. On or~~  
34 ~~before January 1, 1989, the department shall erect suitable signs~~  
35 ~~appropriately restricting truck travel on those highways, or~~  
36 ~~portions of highways, and report its findings and~~  
37 ~~recommendations to the Legislature.~~

38 *(2) On January 1, 2005, and each January 1 thereafter, the*  
39 *Department of Transportation shall update the study described in*  
40 *this subdivision and make available to the public a listing of the*



1 highways or portions of highways identified under this  
2 subdivision.

3 (3) The Department of the California Highway Patrol shall  
4 investigate any accident involving the operation of a combination  
5 of vehicles that occurs on a highway or portion of a highway listed  
6 in the publications required under paragraphs (1) and (2) to  
7 determine whether there was a violation of the reduced maximum  
8 kingpin-to-rear axle length limits and shall record the  
9 kingpin-to-rear axle length of all trucks involved in accidents  
10 investigated by the Highway Patrol.

11 (4) The Department of Transportation shall complete the study  
12 not later than January 1, 2004.

13 (5) On or before March 1, 2004, the Director of Transportation  
14 shall submit to the Legislature recommendations for establishing  
15 regulations pursuant to the findings of the updated study. Before  
16 developing the recommendations, the department shall consult  
17 with representatives of the trucking, agriculture, construction,  
18 logging, and highway safety industries to consider additional  
19 pertinent information that can be considered before the director's  
20 recommendations are finalized.

