

SESSION OF 2018

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 375**

As Amended by House Committee on  
Transportation

**Brief\***

SB 375, as amended, would add specified exemptions to limits on vehicle weights and lengths.

**Vehicle weight.** The bill would authorize the operation of an emergency vehicle at a gross weight not exceeding 86,000 pounds and subject to maximum weights on axles of 24,000 pounds on a single steering axle, 33,500 pounds on a single drive axle, 62,000 pounds on a tandem axle, and 52,000 pounds on a tandem rear drive steer axle. The bill would define “emergency vehicle” for this purpose as a vehicle designed to be used under emergency conditions to transport personnel and equipment and to support the suppression of fires and mitigation of other hazardous situations.

**Vehicle length.** The bill would add an exemption from limits on the lengths of vehicles and vehicle combinations operated on Kansas public roads to allow a towaway trailer transporter combination not exceeding 82 feet in length. The bill would define a “towaway trailer transporter combination” as a trailer transporter towing unit and 2 trailers or semitrailers with a total weight not exceeding 26,000 pounds; the bill would require the trailers carry no property and constitute inventory property of a trailer manufacturer, distributor, or dealer. The bill would define a “trailer transporting towing unit” as a power unit not used to carry property when operating in this combination.

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\*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

## **Background**

The bill, as amended by the House Committee, combines provisions of SB 375 and SB 391.

### ***SB 375—Length Limits***

SB 375 was requested by a representative of the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), who testified as a proponent of the bill in the Senate Committee on Transportation hearing. No other testimony was provided.

As noted in KSA 2017 Supp. 8-1904 (which would be amended by the bill), the general length limit for a combination of vehicles is 65 feet. Federal law, in 49 U.S. Code § 31111, prohibits a state from prescribing or enforcing length limits other than those established in federal law. As noted in testimony, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (P.L. 114-94), signed into law in December 2015, added an exception to the general length limits that would be mirrored by the bill.

The Senate Committee recommended the bill be placed on the Consent Calendar.

A KDOT representative provided proponent testimony in the House Committee on Transportation hearing. No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended the bill to add the provisions of SB 391 (weight limits).

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, enactment of SB 375 would have no fiscal effect on the operations of KDOT or the Kansas Highway Patrol.

### ***SB 391—Weight Limits***

SB 391 was requested by a KDOT representative, who testified as a proponent of the bill in the Senate Committee on Transportation hearing. No other testimony was provided.

A KDOT representative provided proponent testimony in the House Committee on Transportation hearing. No other testimony was provided.

As noted in KSA 2017 Supp. 8-1909 (which would not be amended by the bill), the general weight limit for a vehicle or combination of vehicles is 85,500 pounds, or 80,000 pounds if operated on the interstate system. Federal law, in 23 U.S. Code § 127, requires withholding of certain federal transportation funding if a state permits weight limits on interstate and “defense” highways other than the gross weight and axle load limits established in federal law. As noted in testimony, the FAST Act added an exception to the general weight and axle load limits that would be mirrored by the bill.

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on SB 391, as introduced, the League of Kansas Municipalities indicates it does not possess data on the weights of city emergency vehicles but estimates any fiscal effect on cities as a result of enactment of the bill would be negligible.