

Department of Planning and Budget 2007 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** HB1645

House of Origin ☒ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed

Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. **Patron:** Cole

3. **Committee:** Transportation

4. **Title:** Overweight permit; underground pipe cleaning, hydroexcavating, etc. to be issued

5. **Summary/Purpose:** This bill would codify weight limits for special trucks used for hydroexcavation, water blasting, and underground pipe cleaning and allow such trucks to use Virginia highways under overweight permits. These vehicles could have gross weights of no more than 64,000 pounds, a single axle weight of no more than 20,000 pounds and a tandem axle weight of no more 44,000 pounds.

6. **Fiscal impact estimates are indeterminate.** See Item 8.

7. **Budget amendment necessary:** No.

8. **Fiscal implications:** Hydroexcavation utilizes a pressurized water and vacuuming process to excavate an area, eliminating the risk of damaging existing underground infrastructures such as fiber optic cables, sewer pipes, dangerous gas lines, or process lines. There are only a few companies which operate this type of vehicle in the Commonwealth and less than 20 total vehicles which would fit into this exception are currently being operated in the Commonwealth.

This bill would add § 46.2-1149.5 to the Code, allowing an overweight permit to be issued for this equipment. Currently, only a 5 percent overload permit can be issued because the load is reducible. Operators are eligible for a 5 percent overload permit pursuant to § 46.2-1128, but this only increases the maximum tandem axle weight to 35,700 pounds and the gross weight to 56,700 pounds. Water can be removed from the vehicle, making it conform to the weight limit. However, the equipment cannot be operated as efficiently with less water. This legislation mirrors § 46.2-1149.4, which allows overweight permits for specialized mobile equipment. The only difference is that § 46.2-1149.4 allows the permit to be issued without fee and there is no exception in this proposed legislation. This type of permit is consistent with the other permits offered under Article 18 of Title 46.2 of the Code.

The legislation is silent on the fee issue. With the exception of permits issued under § 46.2-1148, the other provisions under Article 18 administered by the Department of Motor Vehicles do not allow the agency to charge a fee for overweight permits.

9. Specific agency or political subdivisions affected: Virginia Department of Transportation, Department of Motor Vehicles, and local authorities of cities and towns.

10. Technical amendment necessary: No.

11. Other comments: None.

Date: 1/23/07/jlv

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cc: Secretary of Transportation