

House Research Act Summary

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Overview

This bill contains a number of provisions relating to the department of transportation:

- transfers of highway jurisdiction over various highways between MnDOT and local road authorities
- allows the department to set work zone speed limits of up to 55 m.p.h.
- provides for greater flexibility in the dates of winter truck overweight allowances
- transfers authority over railroads and motor carriers from the now-defunct transportation regulation board to MnDOT
- repeals state authority over railroads that has been preempted by the federal government

- 1 **Specific service signs.** Allows signs for grain-handling facilities, businesses providing "care and well-being to animals," and feed and seed stores, to include their signs on specific service (slat sign) installations on highway right-of-way.
- 2-4 **Transfer of highway jurisdiction.** Transfers jurisdiction over various highways between the department of transportation and local road authorities (Olmsted and Ramsey counties, Brainerd, and Minneapolis), effective on agreement between MnDOT and local road authorities.
- 5 **Brainerd bypass.** Adds trunk highway No. 337 (Brainerd bypass, marked T. H. 371) to the trunk highway system.
- 6 **Conveyance of connecting road.** Allows the department of transportation to convey title or easement in land used to construct a road to connect a closed-off street or highway to another public road, or to reconnect a private road to the property served by the road.

- 7 **Hiring in taconite relief area.** Allows MnDOT to require contractors on contracts for transportation projects in the taconite relief area to hire a certain (unspecified) percentage of workers who live in the area.
- 8 **Reconveyance of trunk highway property.** Provides that MnDOT may convey real property acquired for trunk highway purposes back to the original owner only with that owner's consent.
- 9 **Work zone speed limits.** Requires the department or a local road authority to post the limits of a work zone where a work zone speed limit is established.
Allows a work zone speed limit of up to 55 m.p.h. on divided highways. Under existing law a work zone speed limit may not be higher than 40 m.p.h.
Redefines "highway work zone" to provide that it exists only when workers are present.
- 10 **Seasonal weight limits.** Amends the law that allows a 10 percent increase in gross and axle weight limits for trucks statewide, by changing the period when it is allowed from January 1 to March 7 to a period set by the department of transportation based on frost depth.
Makes the same change for the December increase in the northern part of the state.
- 11-26 **Transportation regulation.** Deletes references to now-abolished federal and state agencies with transportation regulation authority (interstate commerce commission, civil aeronautics board, Minnesota transportation regulation board), and substitutes a reference to the surface transportation board where appropriate. Repeals regulatory authority over motor carriers and railroads that has been preempted by federal law and regulation, and transfers other authority from the transportation regulation board to the department of transportation (contested cases, quasi-judicial powers, motor carrier and railroad service and rate orders, conduct of hearings, rail carrier rate furnishing, rail track construction, livestock hauling rates, grade crossing warning devices, rulemaking).
- 27 **Right of first refusal.** Amends the law that requires a railroad in bankruptcy that proposes to sell right-of-way to first offer the property to leaseholders on it. The change in this section repeals the right of either party in such a sale to refer disputes over the property's value to MnDOT for resolution. Section 31 repeals the law that provides for MnDOT settlement of such disputes.
- 28 **Transfers of regulatory responsibilities.** Provides for transfer of regulatory responsibilities over motor carriers and railroads from the transportation regulation board to MnDOT. Abolishes the transportation regulation board.
- 29 **Discontinuance of trunk highways.** Repeals statutory descriptions of trunk highways transferred to local jurisdiction (T. H. 25 north of Brainerd, T. H. 244 in Willernie and Mahtomedi, T. H. 18 and 322 in Brainerd), effective on agreement between MnDOT and local road authorities.
- 30 **Revisor instruction.** Instructs the revisor of statutes to replace references to the transportation regulation board with references to the commissioner of transportation.
Instructs the revisor to change descriptions of trunk highways transferred under this act unless agreements with local governments have not been signed.
- 31 **Repealers.** Repeals statutes relating to the transportation regulation board. Repeals statutes relating to:
 - state authority to set train speed limits
 - caboose requirements
 - state approval authority over removal of rail track
 - rail shop and terminal abandonments
 - state authority over railroad agency service

MnDOT authority to arbitrate disputes over value of rail property offered for sale to tenants