

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Interim:
P.O. Box 109
Wrangell, AK 99929
Phone: (907) 874-3088
Fax: (907) 874-3055

Session:
State Capitol, Room 406
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-3824
1-800-686-3824
Fax: (907) 465-3175

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair HOUSE DISTRICT 33

Sponsor Statement HB 378

“An Act relating to motor vehicle registration, relating to drivers’ licenses; relating to instruction permits; relating to commercial motor vehicles and commercial motor carriers; and providing for an effective date.”

HB 378 changes Alaska statutes to align them with the updated Federal Motor Carriers Administration (FMCSA) regulations. It will make the roads a safer place for all Alaskans by allowing the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to refuse to register or to revoke a registration for a motor carrier or commercial vehicle that does not meet these federal safety standards.

If HB 378 is not passed **this session** Alaska will be out of compliance with federal regulations. Non-compliance could result in the federal government decertifying Alaska’s CDL program. The decertification would jeopardize Alaska’s federal highway funding. DOT reports that based on 2014 apportionments, this could mean a loss of up to \$34M in federal dollars. In addition to the loss of federal funds the DMV will not be able to issue, renew or upgrade any CDL or permits.

HB 378 adds additional safety-related improvements to the commercial permitting requirements to comply with federal mandates, which include raising the age to obtain an instruction permit for a commercial driver from 17 to 18 years of age, and limiting the period of validity to 180 days with the ability to renew the commercial permit for a period of 180 days instead of two years. A five year timeframe is added that will allow a person to apply for an instructional permit after they have been issued a certain class of license.

A Commercial Driver License (CDL) permit will be disqualified in the same manner as a commercial license if the driver is operating out of service or is convicted for crimes that include driving under the influence, refusal to submit to a chemical test, manslaughter, or negligent homicide resulting from driving a motor vehicle or for the commission of a felony using a motor vehicle. Texting while driving will also be made a serious traffic violation by which CDL operators could lose their license or permit for a period of time.

Additionally, HB 378 contains clarifying language for registration fees charged for vehicles over 10,000 pounds used for personal use and in an individual’s name. This clarification makes it clear that vehicles with an empty weight over 10,000 pounds (except motor homes used for personal use) will be charged the same as commercial vehicles of the same weight.