WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
ACT MEMO

2011 Wisconsin Act 117 [2011 Senate Bill 322]	Permits for Overweight Vehicles Transporting Raw Forest Products

Under ***current law***, the Department of Transportation (DOT) may issue annual or consecutive month permits for the transportation of raw forest products in certain vehicle combinations that exceed highway weight limitations (RS permits). "Raw forest products" is defined to mean, "logs, pilings, posts, poles, cordwood products, wood chips, sawdust, pulpwood, intermediary lumber, fuel wood and Christmas trees not altered by a manufacturing process off the land, sawmill, or factory from which they are taken." When issuing an overweight permit, DOT may impose reasonable restrictions on the permitee as it deems necessary for the safety of travel and protection of the highways.

Also under current law, DOT, or a local highway authority, may impose special weight limitations on a highway because of weakness of the roadbed due to deterioration or climatic conditions or other special or temporary conditions. These special or seasonal weight limitations must be posted by highway signs.

2011 Wisconsin Act 117 prohibits DOT from suspending or imposing any condition or limitation on an RS permit in connection with the thawing of frozen highways that are not state trunk highways or connecting highways. Any vehicle with an RS permit must, however, comply with posted weight limitations on highways where the highway authority has imposed special or seasonal weight limitations.

Effective date: The Act takes effect on March 15, 2012, and first applies to permits issued on that date.

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This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: http://www.legis.state.wi.us/.

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