



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

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**TO:** Senate Business, Transportation and Workforce Development  
Committee

**FROM:** Gregg Dal Ponte, Administrator,  
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**SUBJECT:** SB 223 – Alternate Power Unit Weight Exception

## INTRODUCTION

This measure adds an exception to statutorily-defined truck weight limits. It allows trucks to operate at weights up to 400 pounds over axle and gross weight limits to accommodate alternate power units as a means for reducing engine idling.

## BACKGROUND

The Federal Energy Act of 2005, which took effect in February 2006, mandates that states allow a 400-pound weight limit exception for trucks equipped with engine idle reduction systems. An increasing number of trucks are now equipped with such a system, called an Auxiliary or Alternate Power Unit (APU), so they can operate heaters, air conditioners, refrigerators, and other accessories while parked. The systems use markedly less fuel and produce far fewer emissions than large diesel engines.

Many truck drivers prefer to carry an APU because they park in varied locations and their routes often change. They can't always take advantage of truck stop electrification areas where they can plug in to a stand-alone heating, air conditioning, and power system or the more sophisticated shore power systems for specially-modified trucks.

## WHAT THE BILL DOES

SB 223 adds an exemption to the maximum axle and gross weight limits specified in statute to accommodate vehicles equipped with APUs designed to reduce fuel use and emissions from engine idling. The exemption would specify that the vehicle may exceed the weight limits by not more than 400 pounds.



This bill also adds a provision to Oregon law regarding variance permit violations to allow a weight exception for oversize and overweight trucks operating under an over-dimension variance permit. A new statutory provision would specify that a person does not commit the offense of violating a permit if their vehicle has an APU and the total weight of the vehicle is not more than 400 pounds over the weight authorized by the permit.

#### **SUMMARY**

SB 223 makes changes to bring Oregon law into compliance with federal legislation that calls for an exception to weight limits for trucks equipped with APUs. The changes will have the effect of encouraging the use of Alternate Power Units that reduce fuel use and emissions from engine idling.