

DATE: February 27, 2003

TO: Senate Transportation and Economic Development Committee

FROM: Gregg Dal Ponte, Deputy Director
Motor Carrier Transportation Division

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 425

INTRODUCTION

Senate Bill 425 makes the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) the road authority in charge of establishing vehicle limits and issuing over-dimension variance permits for travel on county roads.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

SB 425 gives ODOT's Motor Carrier Transportation Division (MCTD) authority over both state and county roads when establishing vehicle limits and issuing variance permits.

Although it currently issues over-dimension permits for almost all counties, MCTD does not have a database of sufficient information about county highways to make it easy to immediately take on all road authority responsibilities. Today, MCTD either uses blanket authorizations given by each county or it calls county officials to discuss individual requests.

To implement SB 425, MCTD staff would begin addressing requests on a one-by-one basis as they arise. When in doubt regarding a request for access to a road, MCTD would follow testing procedures outlined in administrative rule (OAR 734-070-0020) to determine if the road can safely accommodate a vehicle or combination of vehicles. The testing process takes several factors into account, including:

- a vehicle's ability to maintain its lane of travel on the highway
- a vehicle's ability to maintain speed on hills
- whether there are turnouts and stretches of road allowing vehicles to pass safely
- condition of pavement and shoulders
- average daily traffic and accident rates

In general, MCTD would work towards applying the existing highway classification system to county roads and bring uniformity to currently widely varying county requirements. Over time, it would develop a statewide routing system that would lend itself to automation.

SUMMARY

SB 425 takes authority away from counties and makes ODOT the road authority for both state and county roads. Although it would be difficult to immediately implement the bill, MCTD would follow established processes for setting vehicle limits and addressing requests for access to county roads.