**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND CHAPTER 3, TITLE 57 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, BY ADDING SECTION 57‑3‑165, TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ISSUE PERMITS FOR THE TRANSPORT OF “UNPROCESSED FOREST PRODUCTS”, TO DEFINE THE TERM, TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONTENTS OF THE PERMIT AND ITS RESTRICTIONS, TO PROVIDE FOR THE FEE ASSESSED FOR THE ISSUANCE OF THE PERMIT, AND TO PROVIDE THAT COLLECTED FEES SHALL BE PLACED IN THE STATE HIGHWAY FUND.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 3, Title 57 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 57‑3‑165. (A) Notwithstanding Article 33, Chapter 5, Title 56 or any other provisions of this chapter, the Department of Transportation, under the terms and conditions in the public interest for safety on the highways, shall issue permits for use on noninterstate routes of public highways for transporting unprocessed forest products.

(B) For the purposes of this section, ‘unprocessed forest products’ means forest products originating and transported from a farm or woodlands to market with delay interruption or delay for further packaging or processing after initiating transport, wood residuals, including woodchips, sawdust, mulch, or tree bark from any site, raw logs to market, and trees grown as Christmas trees from a field, farm, stand, or grove to be processed.

(C) The permit shall be issued for ninety thousand pounds of gross vehicle weight of a vehicle or trailer transporting unprocessed forest products. A single‑axle weight must not exceed twenty‑six thousand pounds and a tandem axle weight must not exceed forty‑four thousand pounds.

(D) A permit does not allow loaded trailers or vehicles transporting unprocessed forest products to be operated on interstate highways above the maximum gross vehicle weight established for the interstate system.

(E) The permit must be issued annually, and it allows movement on the highways at any time. To be valid, the permit must be carried on the vehicle, and it is unlawful for a person to violate a provision, term, or condition of the permit.

(F) The fee for the permit is two hundred dollars, and it authorizes the use of only one trailer or vehicle transporting unprocessed forest products.

(G) Fees collected pursuant to this section must be placed in the State Highway Fund and must be used for defraying the cost of issuing and administering the permits and for other highway purposes.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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