



JOHN SPIROS

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Assembly Bill 558

December 8, 2015

Testimony from Rep. Spiros

Good afternoon and thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation for allowing me to have the opportunity to talk to you today regarding Assembly Bill 558, a bill relating to size and weight limits of vehicles operating on the I 39 and I 41 corridors. Nate Yahn from the Department of Transportation is also here with me to testify on behalf of this bill and take any questions.

This bill makes various technical changes relating to vehicle size and weight limit permits issued by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation authorizing operation of vehicles that exceed weight and length limits on certain highways. In particular, the bill modifies a number of existing provisions in state law to correctly and fully implement the federal weight grandfathering provisions for I-39 and I-41.

Under federal law, no vehicle may exceed specified weight limits on Interstate highways. The 2015-17 Biennial Budget (Act 55) contained several provisions relating to the vehicle size and weight requirements in state law for operation on Interstate highways. The intent of these changes, originally requested by the Department, were to update the applicable existing state statutes in order to fully implement the federal weight grandfathering provisions for I-39 and I-41.

Some of the changes that were ultimately made in Act 55, however, contained inconsistent or incorrect statutory language related to the federal weight grandfathering provisions. This clean-up bill makes the necessary changes to existing state statute to clarify and correctly implement the federal weight grandfathering provisions for both I-39 and I-41. These changes are necessary in order to bring Wisconsin into compliance with Federal Highway Administration weight regulations grandfathering particular segments of I-39 and I-41.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of this bill, and I would welcome any questions.



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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DATE: December 8, 2015

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Transportation
The Honorable Keith Ripp, Chair

FROM: Tom Rhatican, Assistant Deputy Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 558 (size and weight limits of vehicles operating on the I-39 and I-41 corridors)

Chairman Ripp and Committee Members:

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) would like to provide some important background information and commentary to committee members as you consider 2015 Wisconsin Assembly Bill 558 (AB 558). AB 558 will bring Wisconsin into compliance with existing Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) weight regulations for vehicles operating on the Interstate highway system; specifically, the federally grandfathered segments of I-39 and I-41. The Department supports AB 558.

Under federal law, no vehicle may exceed specified weight limits on Interstate highways. With certain exceptions, federal law establishes a maximum gross vehicle weight (GVW) limit of 80,000 lbs. and a weight limit of 20,000 lbs. per axle. All states are required to conform to the existing federal weight regulations for operation of vehicles on the Interstate highway system, or face withholding of federal highway funds. The amounts to be withheld from a state for failing to conform to these federal regulations are 50% of federal highway aid for each year of noncompliance.

AB 558 makes a number of necessary technical modifications to existing state law, relating to vehicle size and weight permits issued by WisDOT authorizing the operation of vehicles that exceed weight and length limits on certain highways. In particular, this bill clarifies and correctly implements the federal weight grandfathering provisions for both the I-39 and I-41 corridors.

WisDOT worked closely with FHWA, the Wisconsin Congressional delegation, and various industry stakeholder groups on the federal weight grandfathering provisions previously enacted for certain segments of both I-39 and I-41. With respect to the I-41 corridor, the increased weight allowances operated on US 41 will be allowed

("grandfathered") to operate on Interstate 41, which was officially designated as an Interstate highway on April 7, 2015.

Two examples of industries that, in particular, will be positively impacted by the I-41 federal weight grandfathering are Wisconsin's waste and recycling industry and paper industry. Both industries comprise of companies currently located along the I-41 corridor that economically depend on being able to continue transporting loads at the higher weights legally grandfathered on I-41, and not be forced to operate on local or secondary roadways.

Enhancing freight mobility is a top priority of WisDOT. AB 558 will ensure the state's conformity with existing federal regulations affecting vehicle weight limits on Interstate highways is continued, and help support the continued growth of the state's economy and freight transport in Wisconsin.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Nate Yahn, WisDOT legislative advisor, at (608) 266-1114.