



JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Senate Bill 566: Vehicle Size and Weight Limits on I 39 and I 41

January 21, 2016

Good afternoon, members of the committee, and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Senate Bill 566, relating to size and weight limits of vehicles operating on the I 39 and I 41 corridors. This bill was authored at the request of the Department of Transportation. Representatives from the department are available today should you have any questions.

As you may be aware, US Highway 41 was officially designated as an Interstate highway on April 7, 2015. Under federal law, no motor vehicle may exceed specified weight limits on interstate highways, except where an exemption exists for specified portions of highway. Under state law, we refer to the grandfathered highway that was formerly US 41 as the "I 41 corridor." This bill similarly modifies statutory language for the grandfathered portion of I 39 as the "I 39 corridor."

In order to retain federal highway aid, it is essential that state statute mirror the federal requirements for vehicle size and weight on federal highways. The bill makes a number of necessary technical changes to the bill that clarifies and corrects the grandfathered weight provisions for both the I 39 and I 41 corridors, including modifications to the original language enacted earlier this session.

Lastly, I have introduced an amendment that deletes incorrect language relating the size and weight restrictions of implements of husbandry and agricultural commercial motor vehicles on the two corridors. The amendment also incorporates new grandfathering language that was included in the recently passed federal transportation bill, which will allow the state to permit a logging vehicles operating up to 98,000 pounds on six axles to operate on a portion of the I 39 corridor.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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DATE: January 21, 2016

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs
The Honorable Jerry Petrowski, Chair

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

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 566 (size and weight limits of vehicles operating on the I-39 and I-41 corridors)

Chairman Petrowski and Committee Members:

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) would like to provide some important background information to committee members as you consider 2015 Wisconsin Senate Bill 566 (SB 566). SB 566 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 SB 566.

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.

SB 566 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. SB 566 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.