

**Testimony on Assembly Bill 578
Assembly Committee on Transportation
Tuesday, January 28, 2020**

Hello, and thank you Chairman Kulp and members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation for allowing me to have the opportunity to share my testimony with you today regarding Assembly Bill 578, which would expand an exception from the commercial driver license requirement for certain use of commercial motor vehicles by farmers.

Under current law, anyone driving a commercial motor vehicle must have a commercial driver license, or CDL. A commercial motor vehicle is any vehicle over 26,000 pounds.

The law provides certain exceptions to this rule. One of those exceptions is for farmers, their family members, and their employees, who may operate a commercial motor vehicle without a CDL under the following conditions:

- They are in Wisconsin and within 150 miles of their farm;
- They are transporting agricultural products, farm machinery, or farm supplies (including hazardous materials) to or from a farm;
- The commercial motor vehicle is operated and controlled by the farmer.

This bill would eliminate the 150-mile restriction to allow farmers to transport products, machinery and supplies to or from a farm within the state of Wisconsin. For the transport of hazardous materials, the 150-mile restriction would still apply.

This bill would make it easier for farmers to do business in the state. We'll hear from individuals today who can speak from personal experience as to why this bill is needed.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to share testimony in support of this bill, and I welcome any questions you might have.

Robert Nigh
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Viroqua, WI 54665

Assembly Committee on Transportation

Support for Assembly Bill 578

Thank you Chairman Kulp and committee members for allowing me to testify today in **Support** of **AB 578**. I am Robert Nigh a dairy, crop and beef farmer from Vernon County. I also represent the six counties in the southwest corner of Wisconsin on the WFBF Board of Directors. Please **Support** this bill because, with a small amendment, it updates Wisconsin law to be consistent with Federal Law. With this consistency in place we would eliminate a confusing and complicated statute that requires both Farmers and Law Enforcement to calculate an air mile radius of 150 miles. With the consolidation of many entities that farmers sell to and purchase inputs from we are required to travel greater distances to deliver our farm products and gather inputs. Remember farmers pay retail, sell wholesale and pay the freight both ways. Also, many farmers are now transporting farm machinery by semi from farm to farm for both safety and time savings. This small change will help us to remain competitive with other states. In closing, again thank you for your attention and please **Support** this very important legislation, **AB 578**.

Arch Morton, Jr.
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Assembly Committee on Transportation
Support Assembly Bill 578

Hello Chairman Kulp and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Arch Morton, Jr. I Farm in Rock County, just southeast of Janesville. My farm has been in my family for over 90 years. I also serve on the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors, representing farmers in the South-Central part of Wisconsin. Thank you for allowing me to testify here today in support of Assembly Bill 578.

The federal law was changed in 2012 to eliminate the 150-mile radius for farmers who are moving agricultural products or supplies for their farms. Our farmers face too many regulations and restrictions, that are completely unnecessary. The federal government saw that the 150-mile radius restriction was not needed, and I think that Wisconsin should follow suit. It would be good to have consistency between states, especially in my area, as I farm less than ten miles from the Wisconsin/Illinois state line.

Why do we want to make it harder for our farmers to feed their families, and harder for them to feed the world? We don't and this bill helps us make one small change forward.

I ask that you support Assembly Bill 578. Thank you!