



**U.S. Custom Harvesters, Inc.**  
119 W Sherman  
Hutchinson, KS 67501  
Phone: 620-664-6297 Fax: 620-664-6265  
E-mail: [uscustomharvesters@gmail.com](mailto:uscustomharvesters@gmail.com)

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To: Senate Transportation Committee, Chairman Mike Petersen

From: Taff Hughes, Vice President US Custom Harvesters Inc.

Re: SB 99

Good morning Chairman Petersen and Members of the Committee, my name is Taff Hughes, President US Custom Harvesters Inc (USCHI), and owner/operator of Hughes Harvesting of Ellinwood Kansas, early May every year I along with family members and 7 hired personnel, load up our 3 combines, tractor/ grain cart and 5 trucks and 2 pickups head south for central Texas to start wheat harvest, following the amber waves of grain North making several stops one at our home for 2 weeks then North to the Dakotas completing our small grain harvest in North Central North Dakota usually mid-September then returning to Central Kansas to complete our fall harvest of corn, soybeans and sorghum usually ending in late November. We have followed this routine for the last 20 years, serving the same clients year after year.

USCHI is a trade association with nearly 400 members and almost 100 of those are Kansas businesses. Our national office is located in Hutchinson, Kansas. As you would guess, our members travel throughout the US harvesting crops. Our members travel on an average of 130 days for grain harvesting and 100 days for forage harvesters.

Over the past 10 years, USCHI has sought to achieve an exemption for Kansas from federal and state length limits similar to the exemption Nebraska has enjoyed. To gain the exemption, both federal and state law must be amended. Passage of a federal exemption was the first step.

We are pleased to report that the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 passed by the Congress before Christmas included the necessary language to allow Kansas to make adjustments for truck lengths for custom harvesters moving equipment within Kansas. Congressman Yoder and Senator Moran were our champions in getting the necessary language into the appropriations bill. The letters of support from the Kansas legislature were instrumental to illustrate the state's support of this critical industry. The federal amendments were supported by the Kansas Department of Transportation, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Motor Carriers Association and many agricultural organizations. The Kansas Highway Patrol also consulted on the language. Thank you all for the help.

Now that the federal bill has passed, we are seeking passage of SB 99 to amend Kansas law. The proposed amendment would allow one truck-tractor, two trailer combinations or one truck-tractor, one semitrailer combination used in transporting equipment utilized by custom harvesters under contract to agricultural producers to harvest commodities to exceed the current length restrictions, but the length of the property-carrying units, excluding the load, may not exceed 81½ feet.

This exemption, if adopted, will save custom harvesters time and money in the movement of equipment. We ask that this SB 99 be passed as soon as possible, and the law effective upon publication so it will be helpful this harvest season.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be happy to answer questions.