



Producers Agricultural Marketing Association
James L. Jirak
General Manager & President

To the Honorable Chairman Proehl
and Honorable Members of the Kansas House Committee on Transportation,

I wanted to comment on HB 2644, creating maximum weight exemption for haulers of grain and agricultural goods. I would like you to consider adding wording to the bill to expand the exemption to commercial grain haulers in addition to agricultural farming producers. There are a few considerations that I would like you to weigh.

First, with our operation bordering Nebraska just 15 miles away, increasing maximum weights would put us at more of a competitive parity with other states such as Nebraska and Iowa. Currently, Nebraska allows for 90,000lbs on six axles and 95,000lbs on seven axles. In Kansas, the maximum possible weight is 85,500lbs. The difference may not seem like that much, but that difference is the equivalent of 75-160 bushels of wheat. If you take that times an example of a short haul freight charge of \$.25/bu, that overall difference could mean \$20-\$40 per load. This would of course multiply on longer mileage hauls.

If we were to haul grain more efficiently by hauling more bushels per truckload, this would help us be more competitive with neighboring grain elevators that already have this weight advantage. Efficiency in freight would translate into a better margin for our country elevators and that margin could possibly be reflected back into the cash grain price that we can offer to our farmers. Even a \$.05/bu difference in grain price could mean the difference of the farmer hauling grain to us vs. going down the road to someone else (such in Nebraska). With the current state of low grain prices, farmers are giving consideration to even small differences in grain prices.

We have found that many Nebraska grain haulers are unwilling to pick up grain at our Kansas facilities because they are not able to haul as much as they could in other states. This has caused a transportation issue for us in not always being able to get trucks when needed. I understand the truckers frustration, because, as I gave in the example of the difference in bushels, this limits the truckers ability to make money on grain hauls coming out of our elevators.

Lastly, some of our facilities do not have rail service, so this would be a great relief in being able to transport grain more quickly and efficiently. Even at our facilities with rail service, the availability of rail cars and timeliness of the cars have been severely lacking. For example, after the 2014 wheat harvest, we ordered cars in August and did not receive cars until January 2015. It is extremely difficult to plan when we rely on rail to empty elevators to prepare for the next harvest, so increasing weights on trucks could eliminate some of this stress.

I appreciate your time to hear my comments on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James L. Jirak", with a stylized flourish at the end.

James L. Jirak
President/General Manager

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