



TESTIMONY

TO: The Honorable Rich Proehl, Chair
And Members of the House Transportation Committee

FROM: Whitney Damron
On behalf of the Board of Commissioners of Coffey County

RE: HB 2644 – An Act regulating traffic; concerning weight limits

DATE: February 17, 2016

Chairman Proehl and Members of the Committee:

The Board of Commissioners of Coffey County would like to express its opposition to HB 2644 that would substantially increase the allowable weight of vehicles on Kansas roads.

Coffey County Engineer Wayne Blackbourn advised the Commission that the increased weights allowed under HB 2644 could have a significant, negative impact on the roads, bridges and infrastructure of Coffey County, and expressed the following concerns:

- Road and bridge limits are set for a reason. Limitations on what a road bed or structure can safely handle without incurring damage are based upon science and engineering, not economies of transportation.
- Typical county roads are very compatible with traditional farm and agriculture vehicles. However, as the agricultural industry has transitioned more and more to semi-trucks, significant challenges have arisen for county governments as they attempt to direct truck traffic routes to roads that can safely accommodate such traffic. Oftentimes there are no good alternatives.
- Increased weights will substantially increase maintenance costs for all Kansas counties. With the State of Kansas reducing its investment in road maintenance (delayed preservation funding), this means more of these costs will be born at the local level.
- Coffey County roads and structures have been evaluated to determine they can meet current weight allowances. HB 2644 will require all roads, bridges and structures to be re-evaluated for the new limits. This cost will be born at the local level. In instances where such roads and structures cannot withstand the increased load limits, they will have to be closed and traffic re-routed, thus potentially inconveniencing all citizens. Road closures already have occurred in counties that cannot meet current weight limits. The impact of these higher limits can only make that situation worse.

The Board of Commissioners of Coffey County believes HB 2644 needs significant study before it advances in the legislative process. The impacts on public safety and infrastructure are simply too great without additional information.

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners of Coffey County, I thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

WBD