



March 14, 2017

Chairman Peterson and members of the Senate Transportation Committee:

Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to appear today in support of H.B. 2095, allowing six-axle, 90,000-pound semitractor-trailers to operate on Kansas state and local roads.

I am Lucas Heinen, current president of the Kansas Soybean Association. I am grateful to be here today to confer with you about an issue that is highly relevant to my farm. As a row-crop farmer producing 600 acres of soybeans and corn annually in Everest, Brown County, Kansas, I am familiar with what it takes to get my grain to market.

You will hear today research that indicates increasing truck-weight limits, among other positive results, would provide greater efficiency and safety in transporting soybeans and other grains. Soybean producers in some areas of Kansas might move their crops 100 miles or more to reach the best markets. The costs of transportation can really add up.

It would logically follow that the provisions of H.B. 2095 would create a climate where these Kansas farmers could make fewer trips to elevators in more distant locales, resulting in less truck-traffic density and potentially increased safety on the state's highways.

Speaking of safety considerations, you will also learn during today's meeting that, even though H.B. 2095 will allow more freight to be transported per semi, the size and length of the vehicle will not increase. This will allow the truck to use a higher percentage of its available capacity.

Additional braking capability and decreased stopping distances in six-axle trucks, compared to trucks with five-axle, 80,000-pound weight limits has also been supported by research.

I would like to make a personal observation. It seems to be to a public perception that somehow trucks are less safe and truck traffic more perilous to general highway traffic.

Over the years, I have hauled many bushels of grain down the road to market. The few times that I have experienced a close call in regard to an accident, the other vehicle involved has always been an automobile and not another truck. It seems as though automobile drivers just don't have a healthy respect for trucks and tend to make poor decisions in an effort to put me behind them. I enjoy driving a truck to town, but if I could haul more per trip, it would reduce my time spent on the highway and exposure to having an accident.

Once again, I respectfully ask the Committee to vote yes on H.B. 2095. This move will be a positive step in contributing to the ability of Kansas farmers and ranchers to continue to feed the state, the nation, and the world in the most efficient and economical manner possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucas Heinen, President
Everest, Kansas