

Interim Transportation Committee
Thursday, August 20, 2015 – Roughrider Room

North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT)
Ron Henke P.E. – Deputy Director for Engineering

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I'm Ron Henke, and I serve as the Deputy Director for Engineering at the North Dakota Department of Transportation (DOT).

The DOT is working with Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (UGPTI) to develop a scope of work for the Truck Size and Weight Study. The purpose of the study is to assess the potential benefits and impacts of harmonizing truck size and weight regulations between North Dakota and several surrounding states. The study will encompass an agreed upon set of scenarios, including one in which changes are made that would allow the operation of 129,000 pound double trailer trucks.

The primary objectives of the study are to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive analysis of currently legal truck configurations in North Dakota, and;
2. Analyze the effects of potential changes to current configurations and/or legal weight limits, including the use of double trailer combinations and tridem and spread axle tractor-semitrailer trucks

A comprehensive set of benefits and costs will be estimated for each existing and potential new (or modified) truck configuration. The primary benefits will include:

1. Operating cost savings.
2. Energy efficiency gains (and resultant air quality benefits).
3. Improvements in safety leading to reductions in crash and fatality risks.
4. Improvements in highway levels of service as a result of reduced traffic interference between trucks and passenger cars.
5. Potential savings in pavement and bridge costs.

Several scenarios will be analyzed involving the Rocky Mountain Double (operating at 105,500 pounds) and the 129,000-pound double trailer configuration, including:

1. Movements on the National Truck Network in North Dakota.
2. Movements in select corridors.
3. Movements over the entire highway system including County Major Collector routes.

Any changes in truck sizes or weights that may be enacted by Congress during the course of the study (e.g., the use of twin 33-foot trailers on the National Truck Network) will be analyzed.

Also, the study will include a review of current state law on truck size and weight.

To assist us in the study, DOT is appointing an Executive Committee which will consist of members from the following organizations:

- North Dakota Association of Counties
- North Dakota League of Cities
- North Dakota Township Officers Association
- North Dakota Petroleum Council
- North Dakota Department of Commerce
- North Dakota Grain Growers Association
- North Dakota Motor Carriers Association
- North Dakota Highway Patrol
- Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute

The total cost of the study will be approximately \$200,000 - which will be shared equally between NDDOT and UGPTI. The final draft report will be delivered to this committee in May of 2016.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony and I will be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.