



MCKENZIE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Testimony Prepared for the
House Transportation Committee

March 4 2021

By: Matthew Johansen, McKenzie County Sheriff

Re: SB:2026

Chairman Ruby and Members of the Committee on Transportation, I would like to thank you for allowing me to come before you today.

My name is Matthew Johansen McKenzie County Sheriff and I am here today to express opposition to Senate Bill 2026, a bill which would allow "road trains". While this legislation does not specifically state what size these massive trucks would be, I have seen reports they could weigh over 300,000 pounds and be 200 feet long.

It has been my position, that allowing heavier and longer trucks would create serious safety hazards and accelerate the deterioration of our state and local roadways, highways and our bridges. Senate Bill 2026 runs contrary to our mission of protecting the public.

Study after study has shown that adding more weight and length to a truck makes it more dangerous. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) found in its 2016 report to Congress that heavier trucks had anywhere from 47 percent to 400 percent higher crash rates in limited state testing. And these are for trucks weighing 91,000 and 97,000 pounds – not the "road trains" we are referring to here. Other safety concerns include braking problems, longer stopping distances and higher out-of-service violation rates, all of which lead to more dangers for North Dakota residents.

And from a common sense perspective, these bigger trucks, when involved in a crash, will lead to more injuries and deaths. This is simple physics. The more the mass of the truck, the more damage it will do when it hits something. Unfortunately, many times those are cars with people inside.

Taking into account that North Dakota normally sees some form of winter storms that affects our roadways, this is another factor that makes the integrity of stopping and control even more important.





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Based on statistics from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, there were 626 large-truck crashes in North Dakota in 2018. Unfortunately, 21 people lost their lives in those crashes. Throughout my 20 plus years in Law enforcement I have seen my fair share of serious crashes involving semi trucks vs Vehicles where lives have been lost, one life lost is too many and I can't imagine what would happen if we had larger trucks than what we already have. I ask you, Is it really worth it?

One last point. Federal law does not allow these massive trucks on North Dakota interstates. If passed, SB 2026 would force the heaviest trucks in operation onto our state, county and local roads and bridges. I do not think anyone would argue that our local infrastructure was not built to handle "road trains". This would directly impact our communities – the very communities where our families live, work and play.

I recognize the importance of the trucking industry and the men and women that do the job. However, from a public safety perspective, I ask that you put safety first and oppose SB 2026.

