

January 6, 2021

Senator Dave Clemens, Chairman
Senate Transportation committee

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

My name is Dan Zink, I am with the Red River Valley & Western Railroad Company (RRVW), headquartered in Wahpeton, ND. The RRVW is one of four short line railroads in North Dakota. Short Line railroads are small companies that provide local rail service in rural parts of North Dakota where the larger railroad networks do not reach.

This letter is to express my opposition to SB 2026 which would give executive authority to the Governor to allow operation of "Road Trains" on North Dakota roads and highways.

Recently the ND Legislature granted authority to allow up to 129,000 lb loads on a specified network of highways in ND. This was a 61 percent increase in weight, and now SB 2026 would increase that limit to an unknown and unlimited weight and length. I do not know if the bill's proponents have used this recent 129,000 lb network option, but I have to ask, how much is enough?

When the 129,000 lb network was established, it was thoroughly researched and analyzed by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, which gave the process credibility and an orderly, scientific review. This is the type of rigorous study that should be conducted for the "Road Trains" proposal, to include all the engineering, safety, local road impacts, and other issues that are still unknown.

If all the relevant factors are analyzed and the conclusion is that larger trucks are good for North Dakota, then our State's short line railroads will compete to the best of our ability. However, when these weight limits are increased without the proper vetting and consideration of impacts on our roads and citizens, then we must object.

We therefore stand in opposition to SB 2026.

Respectfully,

Daniel L. Zink
Red River Valley & Western Railroad Company
Wahpeton, ND