

Professional Fire Fighters of North Dakota

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3-2-2021

House Transportation Committee,

Mr. Chairman and members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Darren Schimke, President of the Professional Fire Fighters of North Dakota (PFFND). I represent 415 professional firefighters across our great state. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of SB 2026.

The PFFND strongly believes that if approved, road trains will pose undue safety hazards to firefighters, EMT's and paramedics while on our highways responding to emergency scenes and while on said scenes treating motor vehicle accident victims and/or individuals experiencing a medical emergency while traveling. We base our opinion on actual incidences and near misses that have been experienced traffic loads throughout our State by our members. We respond and do all types of "work" on these highways, the shoulders and ditches. This work consists of vehicle fires, patient extrication, vehicle accident treatments and medical emergencies.

All members of the PFFND are employed with Departments that have the National Network highways and interstates running through or near them or are at least part of their respective response areas. This does not include the departments that provide patient transports. These transports take our members not only throughout North Dakota but also into Montana, South Dakota and Minnesota. An example would be Williston ND Fire/Ambulance conducting a patient transport from Williston, ND to Rochester, MN.

We are not implying that the operators of road trains would be causing accidents throughout our State. In fact, we believe that these operators are some of the best drivers in the country. The fact is, circumstances present themselves and accidents occur. Our State is considered rural by some but we are not as large and barren as the Australian Outback where these road trains are more common. What we do have is more highway traffic than some of the Outback. Some of our National Network highways are the main thoroughfare through cities and towns. Additionally, our wind and snow conditions can be quite treacherous for large vehicles. Again, it's not necessarily the road train operators; it's others that may try to pass these long vehicles through snow dust, heavy winds or just while climbing up a good old North Dakota mountain not knowing what is coming up on the other side.

We respectfully request your consideration of a Do Not Pass recommendation from the House Transportation Committee regarding SB 2026.

Thank you,

Darren Schimke