



Testimony Prepared for the  
**House Transportation Committee**

Thursday March 3, 2021

By Nick West PE, Grand Forks County Engineer, Allendale Township Chairman,  
NDACE President

**RE: Senate Bill 2026**

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 2026 on behalf of Grand Forks County, Allendale Township and ND Association of County Engineers.

I believe SB 2026 has good intentions, but the way it's currently written would create safety and infrastructure issues, gives too much authority to the Governor, warrants further collaboration, and I question the overall need for what the bill is trying to accomplish.

Our road and bridge infrastructure is barely capable of sustaining the current configuration of trucks and equipment, many argue our infrastructure is going backwards in terms of quality. The undefined road train truck would further set back the quality of our roadway system, create load capacity issues for bridges and puts a severe strain on the intersection geometric improvements necessary to accommodate a longer truck.

This bill authorizes the Governor to have total control of the program, which means he could dictate that the program includes County or Township roads without the local government's input. If while during the pilot program is conducted and the roadways are damaged, there is no mechanism to repair such damages. Having one agency/person having an unfunded control authority over another agency is not good policy.



## County Highway Department

A road train would create a load capacity issue for bridges that needs to be specifically addressed in detail and must include collaboration with the County's. Even if the per axle weight is maintained by the current laws, the total weight on a longer bridge is compromised and must be evaluated. Additionally, the County and Township intersections are not wide enough to support the large turning radius of a road train.

In questioning the true need of this initiative, we already have a good process in place to analyze and permit larger trucks, up to 129,000 pound trucks. In Grand Forks County we've only had one industry inquire about options to use heavier trucks. In 2019, American Crystal Sugar Company obtained permission from Grand Forks County to use this heavier truck option, however they've never requested the permit, and thus haven't taken advantage. Similarly, when this bill was heard in the Senate Transportation Committee there was no industry testimony in support. This low level of interest from industry indicates to me that the desire or need for road trains is minimal.

I am not against larger heavier trucks on the road, as I was truly supportive of the 129,000 pound initiative. The difference between the 129,000 and road train program is the local collaboration & control and steps in place to process and approve the permits.

I would recommend that SB 2026 be tabled, researched further, collaborated with local government in the interim session, and readdressed in the 68<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, therefore I would recommend a "do not pass" vote on this bill. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions. I can be reached via phone at Office: 701-780-8248, Mobile: 701-317-0126 or via email at [nick.west@gfcounty.org](mailto:nick.west@gfcounty.org).