



Testimony Regarding HB 1407

House Political Subdivision Committee

January 22, 2025

Prepared by: Dana G. Larsen, PE, Ward County Engineer

RE: Opposition to HB 1407 – Relating to increasing weight limits on all roads to 113,000 lb

Chairman Ruby and House Transportation Committee members, I am Dana Larsen and I serve as the County Engineer for Ward County. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1407 which is proposing to increase weight on all roads to 113,000 lb This would be a staggering 41% increase to the maximum vehicle weight on Township and County Roads.

I am opposed to making changes to the maximum vehicle weight limits. Our township roads and many of our county roads were not designed to support such heavy loads. Increasing the weight limit from 80,000 lb to 113,000 lb will have several significant impacts:

- **Structural Damage:** The increased weight will accelerate the deterioration of asphalt road surfaces that do not have adequate subgrade support, leading to more frequent and severe potholes, cracks, blowouts, and other forms of damage, shortening the life of the roadway. All the bridges within the state would need to be load rated to look at larger truck configuration, and this cost should not fall to the local entities to conduct these load ratings.
- **Maintenance Costs:** With the potential increased maintenance costs on our local roads and bridges, counties and townships will need to purchase and install weight limit signs to protect their roadways that are not capable of supporting these heavier loads. This will place a considerable financial burden on townships and small counties to install and enforce restrictions or fund these repairs and upkeep efforts.
- **Safety Concerns:** Damaged roads and weakened structures pose safety risks for all road users but with larger and longer trucks, there would be issues with the turning radius at intersections. There are also safety concerns when these large loads meet other trucks or vehicles on the roadway, they either don't make room for the other driver because they are concerned about being too close to the soft or steep inslope on township and some county roads, or they move over to the shoulder which can sometimes fail causing the truck to overturn.

I do want to acknowledge there is a benefit to having more axles if a road is built to support heavier loads. A state or county road built to support 105,500 lb loads with minimum or no spring weight restrictions, most likely will have minimum impact from a 113,000 lb load with more axles. However, the legislation has already approved loads up to 129,000 lb, on approved US and State Highway on approved routes. Ward County has also approved two road segments for 129,000 lb. This was necessary, because

there are very few loads, which start and end on a state or US highway. Most loads need to use a local road to access their final destination. Ward County approved these routes because both these segments were built to a higher standard to match the loads already coming from US 2.

Chairman Ruby and committee members, I urge you to consider the long-term consequences of increasing the weight limit on township and county roads. The proposed increase to 113,000 lb will not only strain our infrastructure but also impose significant financial and safety challenges. I believe there already is an option for heavier loads up to 129,000 lbs, but it does require the road to be evaluated to make sure it can support the longer and heavier loads. I respectfully ask for your opposition to HB 1407.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dana G. Larsen, PE

Ward County Engineer