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Mr. Chairman and members of the House Transportation Committee,

I am Brent Baldwin, a farmer from Saint Thomas, North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am representing the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association in OPPOSITION of House Bill 1421.

Throughout North Dakota, there are several locations where the lack of overpasses, county bridges or other obstacles that at times, force farmers and ranchers to use alternative roads like a multilane interstate highway or multilane state highway. However, the use of these types of roads are of absolute last resort. As farmers, we want to avoid busy roads at all costs. Our equipment is large, sometimes we have blind spots, and move generally slower than other vehicle traffic.

We express caution to this committee to charging farmers permits to use a multilane interstate highway. We are concerned that it opens the door to expanding the dollar amount and additional fees down the road. We also are concerned this will expand to needing permits on other public roads like state and county highways.

Additionally, we are opposed to the required flashing hazard warning language. Our equipment is far better lit up now with safety lights than even just 10 years ago. And sometimes when moving equipment, we simply don't have someone available to sit in a pickup behind us. Additionally, we are concerned that this requirement will be expanded to needing a pilot car for other roads like state and county highways.

Because using these public roads are of last resort for us farmers, and we believe this will lead to other unnecessary fees and requirements, we encourage this committee to provide a DO NOT PASS recommendation on HB 1421.

Brent Baldwin – Farmer – Saint Thomas, North Dakota
President - Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association