

North Dakota Stockmen's Association
HB 1421
House Transportation Committee
Room 327E
Jan. 24, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Ruby, and members of the House Transportation Committee. My name is Julie Ellingson and I represent the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, a 95-year-old beef cattle trade organization representing about 3,100 members across the state.

Our organization is strongly opposed to HB 1421, which requires farm tractors to be registered in order to drive on an access-controlled, paved and divided multi-lane interstate highway. Farmers and ranchers require many farm tractors for their work and, therefore, this would quickly become a very costly situation.

Additionally, the majority of these tractor owners spend very little time on the interstate highways to begin with. Most use the interstate as only a very last resort, because they too prefer not to be on the highway amongst speedy traffic and motorists who are not always considerate to those operating this type of vehicle.

Sometimes, though, using the interstate is the only option they have to gain access to their crops and/or animals, because their respective county or township roads are underwater or otherwise in disrepair.

Our industry is committed to safety. And, sometimes, safety is the overarching reason to use the interstate in the first place. Tractors are often better marked than most slow-

moving vehicles, and a divided highway, in some cases, may actually be safer than the two-lane options.

As a livestock producer with a family ranching operation that spans both sides of the river, I know the great care my husband, sons, son-in-law and nephew take to get back and forth with tractors and other equipment safely and without being disruptive to traffic flows.

In our estimation, HB 1421 does not add to the safety of the people on the roads, but it does create a quite expensive proposition for the families producing the world's food.

We urge a do-not-pass recommendation.