



HOUSE BILL NO. 1614
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
DAN RUBY, CHAIR
TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 1614

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee. I am Parrell Grossman, and it is my privilege to be the Legislative Director for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association. I appear on behalf of the Association in opposition to House Bill 1614.

The Association advocates for more than 8,900 operations that raise soybeans in North Dakota. In 2024, North Dakota farmers planted 6.6 million acres of soybeans, producing over 245 million bushels of soybeans in North Dakota.

Although this new law certainly is well-intended, this legislation is the wrong direction for the North Dakota agricultural industry, including our farmers and ranchers.

Requiring the physical presence of an operator with a valid commercial license in an autonomous truck in North Dakota appears to be contrary to what the majority of states are doing, and simply is unworkable in using this technology in North Dakota.

The Association believes autonomous trucks will provide tangible benefits in many North Dakota sectors, whether agricultural such as soybeans and sugar beets, or other important industries like oil and gas.

Autonomous trucking presents an important opportunity and will provide significant benefits for rural agriculture for several reasons:

1. Addressing Labor Shortages

Rural areas often struggle with a shortage of truck drivers, especially during peak harvest seasons. Autonomous trucks can help fill this gap, ensuring that crops are transported efficiently without relying solely on human drivers.

2. Reducing Transportation Costs

Farmers and agricultural businesses operate on thin profit margins. Autonomous trucks can lower fuel consumption, reduce labor costs, and optimize routes, making transportation more affordable.

3. Enhancing Road Safety

Trucking can be dangerous due to driver fatigue. Autonomous trucks can reduce the risk of accidents, leading to safer roads for both agricultural and general traffic in rural areas.

4. Supporting Precision Agriculture

Autonomous vehicles can well-integrate with other smart farming technologies in North Dakota. Our farmers are very familiar with this technology today and have already adapted to technology options in practice across the state every day.

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Transportation Committee, for these reasons, and others already stated, the Association respectfully asks the House Transportation Committee to give House Bill 1614 a “Do Not Pass” recommendation.