

HB 1518

Chairman Clemens and Members of the House Transportation Committee.

For the record, I am LaurieBeth Hager Representative from District 21 in Fargo. D21 is the middle corridor of Fargo along old Highway 10 or Main Avenue from the Red River and into an eastern corner of West Fargo. I am a former member of the House Transportation Committee. I currently have only 1 roundabout in my district.

House Bill 1518 addresses signaling while driving in a round. In ND Century Code this is called a rotary traffic island. The changes are found in lines 16 and 17 removing the word "not" and the word "first." This bill would eliminate the legal requirement for a driver to signal their exit while driving in a Round About which became a part of code following the 68th legislative session.

This bill is a constituent requested bill-- actually multiple constituents in Fargo West Fargo and others across the state. After last session, I was repeatedly asked about the round about signaling legislation perhaps because I had previously been a member of the House Transportation Committee. People were pretty irritated by it and asked the many questions which I will share with you today.

A Round About is a circular intersection where traffic flows around a central island in a counter clockwise direction. Vehicles exit onto the desired road without coming to a complete stop as necessary at a four way stop intersection or a stop lighted intersection. One purpose of the Round Abouts is to improve the traffic flow in high traffic areas. Because speeds are lowered and the counter clockwise flow, accidents could be fewer and potentially not as severe.

Round abouts are becoming more widespread in new developments and high traffic areas not only Fargo and West Fargo but also in Bismarck, Williston, McKenzie County and I believe Minot has a few.

The issue I would like the Transportation Committee to readdress in this session, is the requirement for drivers to signal while driving in/around a Rotary Traffic Island. Here are the question and concerns constituents have brought to me.

Does a driver driving in the roundabout circle have the ability to signal properly and in a timely manner in the short distance between the exit options while in the circle?

Is a driver entering the round about able to observe and trust the signaling of the driver of a vehicle that is driving in the round about that they are exiting immediately? Or might they just have the signal light on the entire time in the roundabout?

Finally is this enforceable? Is a patrol officer able to observe if a driver has used their signal? If this is detectable by a traffic device ? Where is that device located?

Is it the right of way responsibility of the driver in the circle or the driver entering the circle?

Is more signage necessary at roundabouts? Signage that indicates that signaling is required, signage that indicates the need to yield. While urban drivers are encountering more and more roundabouts on their daily driving routes, rural drivers may not be as familiar with roundabouts and how to use them or the signaling requirement.

This bill currently asks for the requirement for signaling to be removed by removing 2 words. This would perhaps mean removing the entire subsection 4.

Perhaps the committee could consider adding language that would address the need for a driver to YIELD rather than the need to signal.

Perhaps the committee would consider amending this section and utilizing or including the term "roundabouts" rather than rotary traffic circles as the term roundabouts is the term used by people in our state.

I appreciate the Transportation Committee for addressing the issue of Rotary Traffic Islands. If there are questions from committee members, I would be happy to respond.

Thank you Chairman Clemens