

2025 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

HB 1421

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee Room JW327E, State Capitol

HB 1421
1/24/2025

Relating to farm tractors, speed limitations, and minimum speed limits; and to provide a penalty.

10:01 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman D. Ruby, Vice Chairman Grueneich, Representatives Christianson, Dressler, Finley-DeVille, Frelich, Hendrix, Johnston, Kasper, Koppelman, Maki, Morton, Osowski, Schatz

Discussion Topics:

- Rear-end accidents
- Electronic signage
- Speed sections
- Hazard lights
- Associated costs

10:02 a.m. Representative Murphy, District 43, ND Legislative Assembly, introduced HB 1421 and submitted testimony #31238.

10:26 a.m. Pete Hanebutt, ND Farm Bureau, testified in opposition.

10:32 a.m. Ryan Gregg, Legislative Specialist, ND Farmers Union, testified in opposition #31266.

10:34 a.m. Dan Wogsland, Lobbyist, ND Grain Growers Association, testified in opposition #31253.

10:35 a.m. Matt Linnemann, Deputy Director of Engineering, NDDOT, stood for questions.

10:39 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby closed the hearing.

10:40 a.m. Representative Frelich moved to adopt amendment LC#25.0609.01002.

10:40 a.m. Representative Koppelman seconded the motion.

10:40 a.m. Voice vote - motion passed.

10:40 a.m. Representative Christianson moved a Do Not Pass as Amended.

10:40 a.m. Representative Dressler seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
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Representative Craig Headland	Y
Representative Jared Hagert	Y
Representative Dick Anderson	Y
Representative Jason Dockter	Y
Representative Ty Dressler	Y
Representative Jim Grueneich	Y
Representative Mike Motschenbacher	Y
Representative Dennis Nehring	Y
Representative Jeremy Olson	Y
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Vicky Steiner	Y
Representative Nathan Toman	Y
Representative Austin Foss	Y
Representative Zachary Ista	Y

10:44 a.m. Motion passed 14-0-0.

10:44 a.m. Representative Koppelman will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Steve Purdue, President, US Durum Growers Association, submitted testimony in opposition #31173.

Brent Baldwin, Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association, submitted testimony in opposition #31193.

Julie Ellingson, ND Stockmen's Association, submitted testimony in opposition #31241.

10:44 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby closed the meeting.

Janae Pinks, Committee Clerk

January 24, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1421

Introduced by

Representatives Murphy, Grueneich

JB 1-24-25
10-5

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new subsection to section 39-04-19 and two new
2 subdivisions to subsection 2 of section 39-06.1-06 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating
3 to farm tractor registration and the amount of statutory fees; to amend and reenact subdivision a
4 of subsection 2 of section 39-04-18 and sections 39-06.1-09, 39-09-02, and 39-09-09 of the
5 North Dakota Century Code, relating to farm tractors, speed limitations, and minimum speed
6 limits; and to provide a penalty.

7 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

8 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Subdivision a of subsection 2 of section 39-04-18 of the North
9 Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

- 10 a. Farm tractors as defined in section 39-01-01, special mobile equipment and road
11 rollers and other road construction or maintenance machinery that cannot be
12 operated on the highways and streets of this state in a normal operating manner.
- 13 (1) The owner or lessee of a farm tractor shall pay the fee under section
14 39-04-19 to operate the farm tractor on an access-controlled, paved and
15 divided, multilane interstate highway.
- 16 (2) While operating on an access-controlled, paved and divided, multilane
17 interstate highway a farm tractor must be:
- 18 (a) Clear of debris and may not leave debris on the interstate highway.
19 (b) Followed by a motor vehicle operating flashing hazard warning
20 signals.

JB 2 of 5

SECTION 2. A new subsection to section 39-04-19 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

A farm tractor may be registered to operate on an access-controlled, paved and divided, multilane interstate highway upon the payment of an annual fee of ~~one hundred~~ twenty-five dollars.

SECTION 3. A new subdivision to subsection 2 of section 39-06.1-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

A violation of subparagraph a of paragraph 2 of subdivision a of subsection 2 of 39-04-18, a fee of one hundred dollars.

SECTION 4. A new subdivision to subsection 2 of section 39-06.1-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Except as provided in section 3 of this Act, a violation of subdivision a of subsection 2 of section 39-04-18, a fee of two hundred dollars.

SECTION 5. AMENDMENT. Section 39-06.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

39-06.1-09. Moving violation defined.

For the purposes of sections 39-06.1-06 and 39-06.1-13, a "moving violation" means a violation of section 39-04-11, paragraph 2 of subdivision a of subsection 2 of section 39-04-18, section 39-04-22, subsection 1 of section 39-04-37, section 39-04-55, 39-06-01, 39-06-04, 39-06-14, 39-06-14.1, 39-06-16, 39-06.2-07, 39-08-20, 39-08-23, 39-08-24, 39-08-25, 39-09-01, 39-09-01.1, 39-09-04.1, or 39-09-09, subsection 1 of section 39-12-02, section 39-12-04, 39-12-05, 39-12-06, 39-12-09, 39-19-03, 39-21-45.1, 39-24-02, or 39-24-09, except subdivisions b and c of subsection 5 of section 39-24-09, or equivalent ordinances; or a violation of the provisions of chapter 39-10, 39-10.2, 39-21, or 39-27, or equivalent ordinances, except subsection 5 of section 39-10-26, section 39-21-44, and subsections 2 and 3 of section 39-21-46, and those sections within those chapters which are specifically listed in subsection 1 of section 39-06.1-08.

SECTION 6. AMENDMENT. Section 39-09-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

39-09-02. Speed limitations.

1. Subject to the provisions of section 39-09-01 and except in those instances when a lower speed is specified in this chapter, it presumably is lawful for the driver of a vehicle to drive the same at a speed not exceeding:
 - a. Twenty miles [32.19 kilometers] an hour when approaching within fifty feet [15.24 meters] of a grade crossing of any steam, electric, or street railway when the driver's view is obstructed. A driver's view is deemed to be obstructed when at any time during the last two hundred feet [60.96 meters] of the driver's approach to such crossing, the driver does not have a clear and uninterrupted view of such railway crossing and of any traffic on such railway for a distance of four hundred feet [121.92 meters] in each direction from such crossing.
 - b. Twenty miles [32.19 kilometers] an hour when passing a school during school recess or while children are going to or leaving school during opening or closing hours, unless a lower speed is designated or posted by local authorities.
 - c. Twenty miles [32.19 kilometers] an hour when approaching within fifty feet [15.24 meters] and in traversing an intersection of highways when the driver's view is obstructed. A driver's view is deemed to be obstructed when at any time during the last fifty feet [15.24 meters] of the driver's approach to such intersection, the driver does not have a clear and uninterrupted view of such intersection and of the traffic upon all of the highways entering such intersection for a distance of two hundred feet [60.96 meters] from such intersection.
 - d. Twenty miles [32.19 kilometers] an hour when the driver's view of the highway ahead is obstructed within a distance of one hundred feet [30.48 meters].
 - e. Twenty-five miles [40.23 kilometers] an hour on any highway in a business district or in a residence district or in a public park, unless a different speed is designated and posted by local authorities.
 - f. Fifty-five miles [88.51 kilometers] an hour on gravel, dirt, or loose surface highways, and on paved two-lane county and township highways if there is no speed limit posted, unless otherwise permitted, restricted, or required by conditions.

JB 4/25

- 1 g. Sixty-five miles [104.61 kilometers] an hour on paved two-lane highways if posted
- 2 for that speed, unless otherwise permitted, restricted, or required by conditions.
- 3 h. Seventy miles [112.65 kilometers] an hour on paved and divided multilane
- 4 highways, unless otherwise permitted, restricted, or required by conditions.
- 5 i. ~~Seventy-five~~Eighty miles [~~120.70~~128.75 kilometers] an hour on
- 6 access-controlled, paved and divided, multilane interstate highways, unless
- 7 otherwise permitted, restricted, or required by conditions.
- 8 2. The director may designate and post special areas of state highways where lower
- 9 speed limits apply. Differing limits may be established for different times of the day
- 10 within highway construction zones which are effective when posted upon appropriate
- 11 fixed or variable speed limit signs.
- 12 3. The director may designate a zone of the access-controlled, paved and divided,
- 13 multilane interstate highways as a high accident zone. In a high accident zone the
- 14 director may reduce the speed limit of the zone to sixty miles [96.56 kilometers] an
- 15 hour. The speed limit reduction is effective when posted upon appropriate fixed or
- 16 variable speed limit signs.
- 17 4. The director may reduce the speed limit on access-controlled, paved and divided,
- 18 multilane interstate highways, when the director determines weather is causing limited
- 19 sight lines and the impacting safety. The speed limit reduction is effective when posted
- 20 upon appropriate fixed or variable speed limit signs.
- 21 5. Except as provided by law, it is unlawful for any person to drive a vehicle upon a
- 22 highway at a speed that is unsafe or at a speed exceeding the speed limit prescribed
- 23 by law or established pursuant to law.
- 24 4.6. In charging a violation of the provisions of this section, the complaint must specify the
- 25 speed at which the defendant is alleged to have driven and the speed ~~which~~that this
- 26 section prescribes is prima facie lawful at the time and place of the alleged offense.

27 **SECTION 7. AMENDMENT.** Section 39-09-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is
28 amended and reenacted as follows:

39-09-09. Minimum speed limits.

1. An individual may not drive a motor vehicle at a reduced speed so as to impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic except when reduced speed is necessary for safe operation or in compliance with law.
2. ~~If~~Subject to subsection 3, the director and the superintendent of the highway patrol, acting jointly, or a local authority within the authority's jurisdiction, determines on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation that slow speeds on any highway or part of a highway impede the safe, normal, and reasonable movement of traffic, the director and superintendent or the local authority may determine and declare a minimum speed limit below which an individual may not drive a vehicle except when necessary for safe operation or in compliance with law, and that limit is effective when posted upon appropriate fixed or variable signs.
3. An individual may not drive a motor vehicle at a speed less than forty miles [64.37 kilometers] an hour while on an access-controlled, paved and divided, multilane interstate highway unless the motor vehicle is a farm tractor followed by a motor vehicle operating flashing hazard warning signals.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1421**

Transportation Committee (Rep. D. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.0609.01002](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO NOT PASS** (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1421 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.



U.S. Durum Growers Association

PROMOTING THE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF DURUM AND SEMOLINA

P.O. Box 1091 • Bismarck, ND 58502 • (701) 214-3203
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Testimony of Steve Perdue
President
HB 1421
January 24, 2025

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee, my name is Steve Perdue, and I'm a farmer from Ray and serve as the President of the U.S. Durum Growers Association (USDGA). On behalf of the USDGA, we oppose HB 1421 due to the burdensome registration of farm tractors and unfeasibility of speed limitations.

USDGA has served to promote the production and marketing of durum wheat and semolina since 1978. The association represents grower and industry members from 10 states. We have many members from North Dakota as the acres produced in the state account for just over half of the country's durum production. Due to durum's hardness, density, high protein, and color it is milled into semolina which is ideal for use in premium pasta.

USDGA is opposed to adding farm tractors to vehicle registration requirements. These tractors spend limited time on access-controlled, paved and divided multilane interstate highways while traveling to access property, which has limited to no access from other road types. Additionally, due to the amount of tractors each operation utilizes, this bill would add another input cost in an already high input and low commodity prices market.

HB 1421 also proposes speed limitations of 40 mph unless a farm tractor is followed by a motor vehicle operating a flashing hazard warning signal. As mentioned before, time traveled on these access-controlled, paved and divided, multilane interstate highways are limited in time and distance. Therefore, this language isn't feasible in all crossing and traveling situations.

Thank you for the opportunity for USDGA to submit written testimony in opposition to HB 1421 and urge a 'Do Not Pass' recommendation.



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email: information@rrvsga.com

January 22, 2025

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

HB1421
Bill Testimony
Rep. Eric J. Murphy
District 43, Grand Forks

This bill provides for a change in the interstate speed limit to 80 mph with restrictions. It is comprised of three separate parts each meeting needs of different stakeholders.

1. A speed limit of 80 mph on interstate highways with a reduction to 60 mph in locations deemed necessary by North Dakota Department of Transportation (ND DOT) for safety.
2. A minimum speed limit of 40 mph on interstate highways. This was requested in conversations with NDHP in Grand Forks and in the 68th session the Transportation Committee heard testimony that the concern is closing speed at 80 mph upon a much slower moving vehicle and difficulty in judging the rate of closing when approaching a vehicle directly from behind.
3. A permit for agricultural producers to allow for farm equipment to be driven on the interstate highway. The permit fee has been amended to \$25 per year for each piece of equipment that must be moved on the interstate per the request of the Agriculture Commissioner. A vehicle shall follow the farm equipment with their hazard lights flashing.

This is a compromise bill that allows for the movement of farm machinery on the interstate highway system in North Dakota while also providing for a minimum speed limit of 40 mph.

A fine for operating farm equipment on the interstate highway without a permit is set at \$200.

A fine for leaving debris on the interstate highway is \$100 per occurrence.

The fiscal note includes either static signs (option 1) or dynamic signs (option 2).

Option 1: \$180,000 for 216 80 mph signs and \$750,000 for 216 40 mph signs plus supports and installation.

Option 2: \$5,400,000 for variable digital signs, wiring, and installation. Costs of operation are \$466,000 per biennium.

It is my opinion that variable digital signs are not needed at the expense noted. While I understand the \$180,000 cost for the 216 80 mph signs and installation, it is difficult to understand the costs of the 40 mph signs not being \$180,000 and the supports being an additional cost of \$570,000 including installation. Nonetheless, that is the fiscal note provided by ND DOT.

This bill provides for objections in the past by including a speed limit minimum and a waiver to limit the impact on our ag producers.

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.



**North Dakota Grain Growers Association
Testimony in Opposition to HB 1421
House Agriculture Committee
January 24, 2025**

Chairman Beltz, Members of the House Agriculture Committee, for the record my name is Dan Wogsland representing the North Dakota Grain Growers Association (NDGGA). I appear before you today in opposition to HB 1421.

HB 1421 raises taxes on farmers, creates farm operational inefficiency, provides unwarranted and unworkable mandates, is unenforceable and does nothing to improve public safety.

To be sure, the last thing farmers and ranchers want is to transport farm equipment down the interstate highway system. That said, transporting farm equipment down the interstate system may be the only way that a farmer can reasonably get from one location to another. This could be because of inundated roads caused by US Fish and Wildlife Service easements, seasonal flooding, lack of road maintenance due to a lack of funding or a host of other factors which limit the farmer reasonable access to their operations. To further impede this access by unreasonable regulation is simply unworkable and unnecessary.

The one hundred dollars fee and the two hundred dollars fine proposed in the bill are simply tax increases on agriculture.

The new language on page 4, Section 6 lines 8-16 is regulatory over-reach and unnecessary.

Page 5, Section 7, lines 6-9, provides for additional logistical and labor challenges for farmers especially during times of planting and harvest. This usually has been a one-person operation in most cases; now requiring at least two people become involved in farm equipment movements is an unreasonable and unfunded mandate on agriculture. Additionally, today's farm equipment is easily recognizable and has safety warnings and lights that are readily visible to the motoring public.

Finally mandating a minimum speed, instead of promoting public safety could in fact endanger not only the motoring public but the farm equipment operator as well. What if, even though a farm implement has a 40 mile per hour or greater speed ability, conditions

warrant a slower speed because of safety concerns. North Dakota weather, as we all know, can change on a dime. Interstate speeds, no matter what the vehicle, should take into consideration the surrounding conditions and not an arbitrary speed mandate.

Chairman Beltz, Members of the House Agriculture Committee, NDGGA respectfully requests a Do Not Pass recommendation on HB 1421 and we would urge the full House to concur.



Contact:
Ryan Gregg, Lobbyist
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**Testimony of
Ryan Gregg
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
House Transportation Committee
January 24, 2025**

Chairman Ruby and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1421. My name is Ryan Gregg, and I am here on behalf of the North Dakota Farmers Union (NDFU). We respectfully oppose HB 1421 because it would increase costs for farmers and impose onerous regulations on the operation of farm tractors.

According to North Dakota's Vision Zero, only a small fraction of accidents involved farm or heavy equipment in 2024.¹ This bill would unnecessarily raise expenses by imposing an annual \$100 fee and increasing labor costs for those operating a farm tractor on an interstate highway.

Our member-driven policy clearly states: "Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) and other warning standards should be used and maintained for farm equipment when traveling on roads." We believe these current standards are already more than sufficient.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the committee give House Bill No. 1421 a "Do Not Pass" recommendation. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Vision Zero ND. (2025, January 8). *Status board update as of 01/08/2025*. <https://visionzero.nd.gov/uploads/118/StatusBoardUpdateasof01082025.pdf>