



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation

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DATE: May 1, 2019
TO: Joint Committee on Transportation
FROM: Amy Joyce, Legislative Liaison
SUBJECT: HB 2403 with -1 amendment

INTRODUCTION

With the -1 amendment, HB 2403 will allow longer trucks to operate under limited circumstances on specific roads near the eastern border of the state. Federal legislation and a strong partnership with the industry proponents makes this a viable option.

DISCUSSION

The federal government largely controls the maximum size and weight of commercial motor vehicles. Those limits vary from state to state depending on each state's standards on the date Congress froze those standards in federal law. ODOT's Motor Carrier Division enforces the size and weight limits on the trucks that drive in and through Oregon. One significant reason for the limits on length and weight of trucks is the impact of heavier and longer trucks on our highway infrastructure: pavement and bridges.

For two years, an agricultural cooperative has worked with ODOT and others to make a small change in federal law to allow efficient hauling of their sugar beets without negatively impacting Oregon's highway infrastructure. The issue is that Federal law allows longer trucks in Idaho than in Oregon. Sugar beet growers in far eastern Oregon truck most of their crop to a processor in far western Idaho. The transportation system would be more efficient if trucks in Oregon hauling the cooperative's sugar beets were allowed the length already legal in Idaho.

The cooperative's representatives diligently worked with ODOT's Motor Carrier Division regulators and Highway Division engineers. Their representatives detailed the single commodity, the short harvest season, the location of the processing facility, and other factors that make this an extremely limited use. ODOT and the cooperative worked together to determine the best highway routes to both achieve efficiency and protect the highway infrastructure. After working through those issues, the cooperative approached the federal government to get Congressional action and amend US Code. Now, the final piece is to amend state law to allow this very limited provision for the additional length of some trucks.

The department appreciates the process proponents used to achieve this change. They respected the existence of federal law and the department's overriding concern to protect the state's investment in infrastructure that is based on the consistency of federal standards.

SUMMARY

With the -1 amendment, HB 2403 makes a surgical and strategic change, for a specific agricultural need. The proponents worked in partnership with ODOT, and the agency stands ready to implement this bill in time for the 2019 harvest.