

Zien testimony on SB 159  
Senate Committee on Transportation and Information Infrastructure  
June 17, 2003

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members for hearing Senate bill 159 today. I know there are other bills on your agenda that could make for a long day, so I will be as brief as possible.

Current law in Wisconsin allows motorists to obtain a permit from the DOT to drive a 3-vehicle combination on Wisconsin roads. This type of rig generally consists of a full-size pickup truck pulling a 5th-wheel camper, and another smaller trailer behind that hauling a boat or other recreational vehicle. Wisconsin limits the overall length of 3-vehicle combinations to 60 feet, while many of our neighboring states and Canada have established limits of 65 feet or greater.

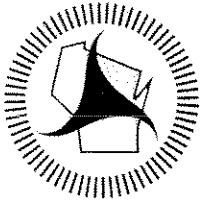
Additionally, Wisconsin is the only state in the Midwest region that requires a permit to pull two recreational vehicles in tandem. Other states merely spell out any specific requirements, such as length limits or requirements for brakes on the second vehicle, in statute, and expect people to follow the law.

This inconsistency creates work for the State Patrol officers, and creates headaches for tourists from other states, and for our constituents who can travel legally with their campers and boats in most other states but not in their home state.

This bill, quite simply, changes the maximum allowed length of the 3-vehicle combination to 65 feet, and eliminates an unnecessary permit process for 3-vehicle combinations. It will make our law more consistent with our neighbors', and will allow more tourists to engage in camping, boating, ATV-riding and other recreational activities right here in Wisconsin.

The bill also makes a number of changes suggested by the Department of Transportation, such as requiring brakes on the second vehicle and banning 3-vehicle combinations during the winter driving season.

Thank you again for your time, and I'm open for any questions you may have.



## Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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### TESTIMONY 2003 SENATE BILL 159

#### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

June 17, 2003  
Madison, Wisconsin

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Division of State Patrol – Lorelee Brumund  
Division of Motor Vehicles – Carson Frazier

Good morning. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) appreciates the opportunity to testify for information on Senate Bill 159 related to 3-vehicle combinations. I am Lorelee Brumund, Legislative Liaison for the Wisconsin State Patrol (State Patrol) and joining me is Carson Frazier, Legislative Liaison for the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

The DOT is generally supportive of SB 159 and we support four specific provisions in the bill. I will briefly identify our points of support and of concern, and then we can address questions or further explanations of our points as requested by the Committee members. I submitted a list of our concerns to Sen. Zien and Rep. Pettis in May, so this information should not be new to Sen. Zien

#### DOT supports:

- Extending the maximum length of 3-vehicle combinations to 65’;
- Requiring brakes on the second vehicle in the combination;
- Including other types of vehicles permitted for the second vehicle in the combination;
- Limiting the operation of 3-vehicle combinations to April through November of each year.

However, the DOT does have some concerns with some of the details of the proposal as written:

- Elimination of the permit requirement for the 3-vehicle combinations would result in a \$35,000 annual loss in revenue for the DOT. In the current tight financial environment, the DOT cannot support this revenue loss.
- The proposed language in SB 159 would exempt the brake requirement for the second vehicle in the combination if that second vehicle is of a model year 1995 or earlier as part of a maximum length of 60' for the combination. This specific requirement is contrary to DOT's strong commitment to requiring any second vehicle to have brakes when weight within the combination increases. We appreciate the concern that some motorists with older trailers that do not have brakes may not be able to pull that trailer as the second vehicle, but we believe that the braking requirement is paramount.
  - Keep in mind that s.347.34(3)(a), Wis. Stats., does not require a towed vehicles having a gross weight up to and including 3000# to have brakes. Additionally, s.347.43(3)(am), Wis. Stats., allows that vehicles being towed that have a gross weight of more than 3000# but are less than 40% of the weight of the towing vehicle, are not required to have brakes. These two existing statutory provisions automatically limit some braking requirements for the towed second vehicle and reduce the number of towed vehicles that require brakes.
  - Thus we recommend that the maximum overall length of 3-vehicle combinations be consistent at 65' with brakes required for all second vehicles regardless of their model year.
- With our recommendation that the permit for the 3-vehicle combinations be retained, we also recommend that the amended language remain in s.347.27(7m), Wis. Stats.

Thanks you for listening to our testimony. We have kept our testimony short to permit time to answer questions or concerns from the Committee and if requested, we also are willing to work with Sen. Zien regarding our concerns.

TO MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE;

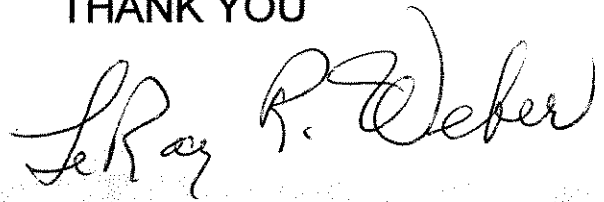
I would like to recommend that you accept bill 159 on extending the length limit for three vehicle permit from 60 ft. to 65 ft. It is a excepted length in most other states and in other states it is even 70 ft.

The trucks and campers are built better to handle a extra vehicle behind. Campers now have better brakes. They are on all wheels, therefore are better equipped to stop.

Most manufacture of RV campers are building them in only a 26 or 27 ft. length and this makes it impossible to pull a boat behind a 5th wheel camper.

I feel by extending the limit to 65 ft. it would cause no hazard to our highways. it would also make it easier for tourist from other states to come and vacation in Wi.

THANK YOU



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# United Transportation Union

TRANSPORTATION POLITICAL EDUCATION LEAGUE

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June 21, 2003

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**RE: 2003 Wisconsin Senate Bill 159 (SB 159) Relating to operating 3-vehicle combinations on highways**

Dear Senator Leibham:

We write to ask that you do not vote for SB 159.

SB 159 reduces state revenue by \$35,000.00 (SEG/SEG-S [3500] – See enclosed fiscal estimate) at a time when there is a state deficit in excess of \$3 billion, and there is contentious debate in both houses of the Legislature over the governor's budget.

Three (3) vehicle combinations, add little if any added value to a weak state economy.

Highway fatalities in Wisconsin continue to accelerate at an unprecedented rate on Wisconsin's crowded highways.

Three (3) vehicle combinations can be as long as a ten (10) story building. A ten (10)-story building traveling in excess of 50 mph has the destructive capability of a large bomb.

A three (3) vehicle combination cannot turn on a dime and when misdirected (lost) it can create immediate, time-consuming, gridlock.

Many professional drivers consider three (3) vehicle combinations unsafe – at any speed.

Therefore allowing greater use of unsafe, unproductive, costly, three (3) vehicle combinations in Wisconsin is not something that is in the best interest of the state of Wisconsin.

Please do not vote for SB 159.

We also ask that you advise us as to your position and intention relative to SB 159.

We look forward to hearing from you in this regard.

Thank you for your time and attention to this.

Kindest personal regards.

Most gratefully yours,



Thomas P. Dwyer II  
Director

Enclosure

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