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Testimony for AB 154 April 23rd, 2013

I would like to thank the Committee on Transportation for allowing me to testify on Assembly Bill 154. The Florence County Economic Development Board requested that I draft a bill that would benefit Florence County sawmills which includes Florence Hardwoods, the counties' 3rd largest employer. This bill allows Michigan configured trucks to operate in Florence County while transporting raw forest materials on an eleven mile stretch of US Highway 2. Michigan configured trucks are already permitted in Ashland, Bayfield, and Iron counties along US Highway 2.

The Positive Impacts of AB 154 would include,

1. Creates Jobs

- a. The Florence County logging industry will benefit greatly from increased competition with Michigan sawmills. As an example, Florence Hardwoods will be able to transport more forest products along this eleven mile stretch.
- b. Florence Hardwoods currently employees 45 people. A potential second shift could be created with this change which could potentially create an additional 33 jobs. Heavier loaded trucks would allow for the expansion employment opportunities.
- c. Allow for more efficiency for Florence County logging trucks.
 - i. Will be able to travel on a direct route into and out of Michigan.
 - ii. Shorter distance for trucks will decrease expenses on fuel.

2. Permitting Process

- a. DOT will issue an annual permit that coincides with the Michigan configured truck weights in select Wisconsin counties. The eleven mile stretch will grant permission to Michigan configured trucks to travel on US Highway 2. This applies only to overweight trucks transferring raw forest products in select counties.
- b. Florence County Board unanimously supported AB 154 and SB 135 in a March 19th resolution (resolution is included within packet).

3. Fiscal Note

- a. We have yet to receive a fiscal note for AB 154.

I do believe this bill will create new jobs in a region of my district that desperately needs them. Competition and increased logging revenues will benefit the Florence County logging industry significantly. I believe expansion of Michigan configured trucks into Florence County will effectively aid a great Northwoods industry.

