



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

KATHY BERNIER

January 25, 2018

Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Testimony on Assembly Bill 697—limitations on animal-drawn vehicles

Good morning Chairman Spiros and committee members. Thank you for scheduling Assembly Bill 697 for this public hearing and allowing me time to present testimony.

The proposal before you today is a simple and common-sense measure that addresses a growing concern in rural Wisconsin – that is, damage to roads caused by horseshoes, especially on newly paved roads. This is a problem in more rural areas as we have a large Amish population that travels on roads exclusively in vehicle pulled by horses.

The idea behind AB 697 came from two individual local government officials in my district – separately but within a week or so of each other. City of Thorp Administrator, Randy Reeg and Eau Claire County Transportation Director, Jon Johnson both informed me they were looking into adopting a resolution to limit access to roads, during summer months, to horses wearing horseshoes due to significant damage done to newly paved roads in their areas. Rather than have a patch-work of varying ordinances, I asked Jon and Randy if they would hold off on adopting their own individual ordinances and allow me to work on a state-wide solution – which would provide certainty to horse drawn vehicle operators that entering a new municipality or county wouldn't come with a new set of regulations.

The bill provides penalties, but I wanted to keep this more as an educational tool so a first offense would be a simple warning. Second offense, a \$25 fine and third and subsequent offenses \$50. I understand that our police officers and sheriff department will not spend time hunting down violators of the ¼ inch limitation this bill provides, but this penalty provision does allow for education of the damage horseshoes can have, especially on newly paved roads, and provides operators the chance to comply without the heavy hand of government coming down on them.

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In working on this bill I shared our plan with the Amish and received word that at a recent quarterly gathering of Amish community members across the state, AB 697 was discussed. I reached out to Samuel Mast who is the defacto state director for Amish affairs. While there is no formal support/oppose process, the group was supportive and understanding of the efforts and issue AB 697 addresses.

Again, thank you Mr. Chairman and committee for the opportunity to speak in favor of AB 697. This concludes my testimony and will be happy to answer any questions I can.



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January 25, 2018

Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Testimony on AB 697 Relating to Limitations on Animal-Drawn Vehicles

I'd like to thank the committee for allowing me to appear here this morning to offer testimony on Assembly Bill 697. My name is Randy Reeg, and I'm the City Administrator in Thorp—a small rural city in Clark County, and part of Rep. Bernier and Sen. Moulton's districts. We live in a very agricultural area, and have a significant Amish and Mennonite presence throughout the county.

As with many municipalities, simply keeping up with the maintenance of our infrastructure is fiscally challenging, and especially so in small rural cities and villages where we can only fund small reconstruction projects and are therefore unable to realize economies of scale. So when we are able to reconstruct our streets, which is perennially the number one request of our citizens, they need to last as long as possible if we ever hope to keep our infrastructure intact.

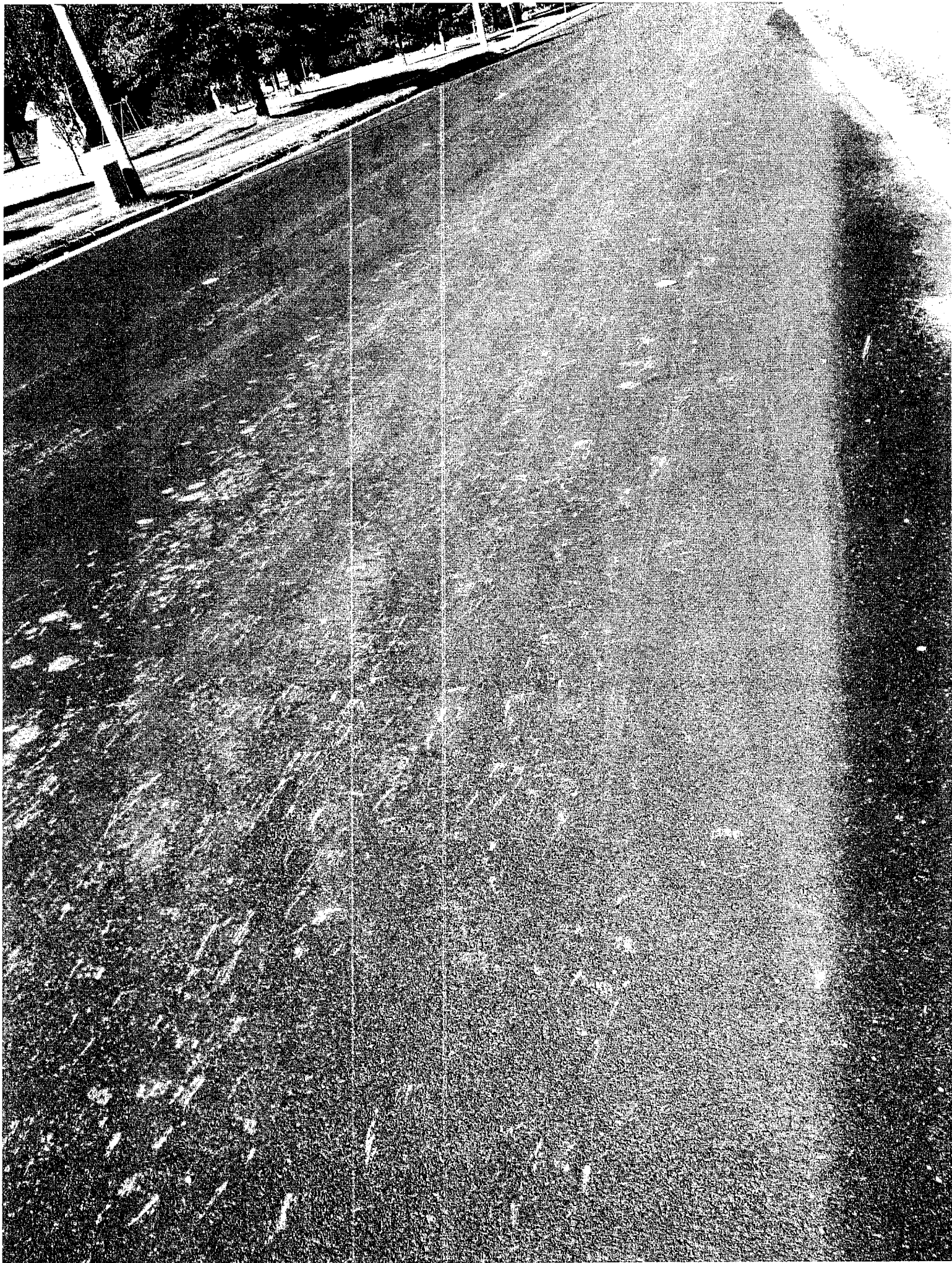
The City of Thorp was recently both fortunate enough and unfortunate enough to become the case study for the damage that can be done to new blacktop by horseshoes. In 2014, we were elated to have the WiDOT completely resurface Hwy 73 through Thorp, with the city paying its proportionate share. While reviewing the project just weeks after the resurfacing was completed, we noticed significant damage to the roadway surface in the parking lanes where horse-drawn vehicles are typically driven. And it was not overlooked by us that this particular portion of the roadway was where the bulk of our local dollars were invested. Sometime that same year I believe I had my initial discussion with Rep. Bernier regarding the issue.

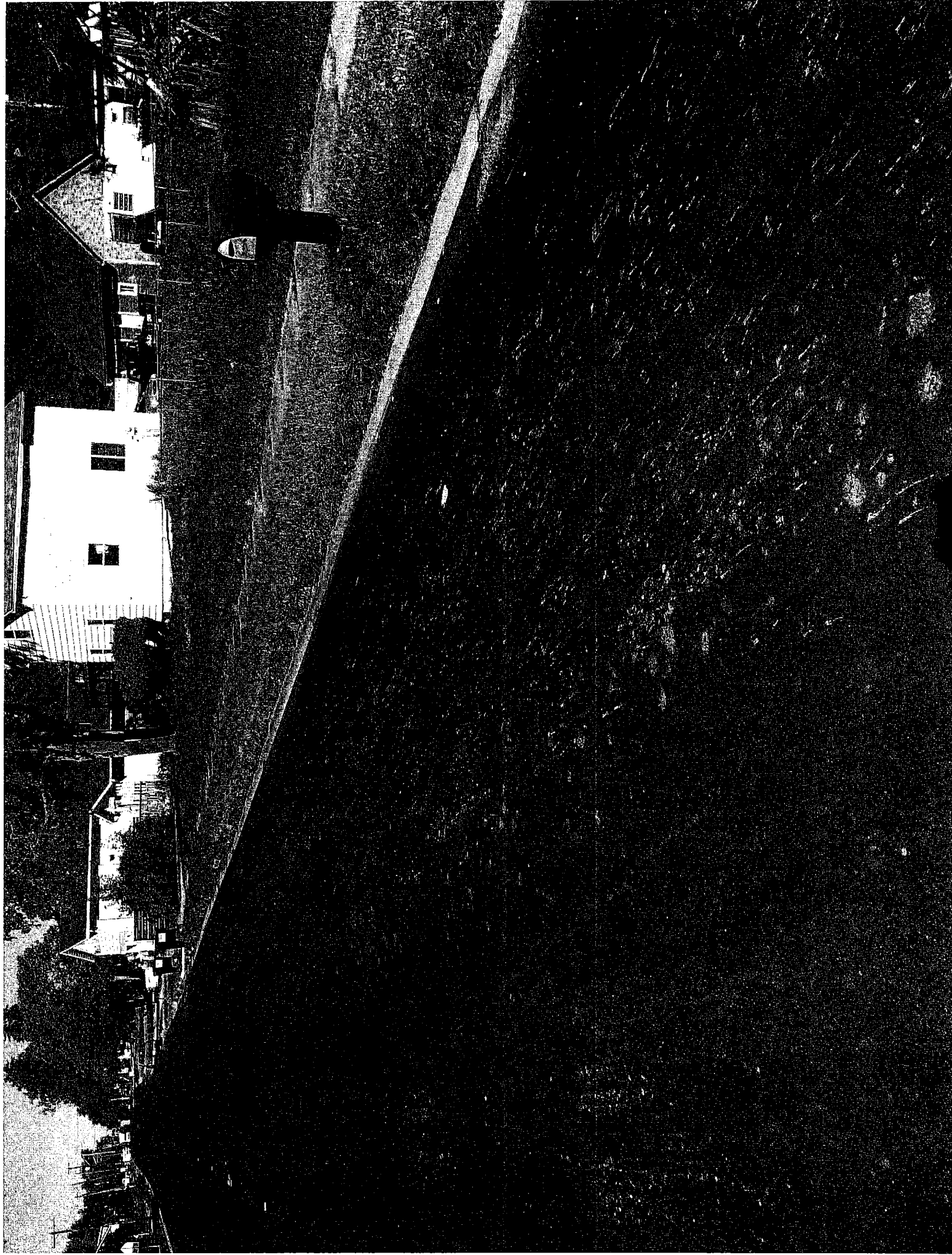
Two years later in 2016, we were fortunate enough to have Clark County completely resurface County Hwy X through Thorp, again with the city paying its proportionate share. Unfortunately, within days of the resurfacing being completed, extensive damage to the roadway surface from horseshoes was again discovered in the parking lanes—again where the bulk of our local dollars were invested. This time I contacted Rep. Bernier who met me on-site to review the damage in person.

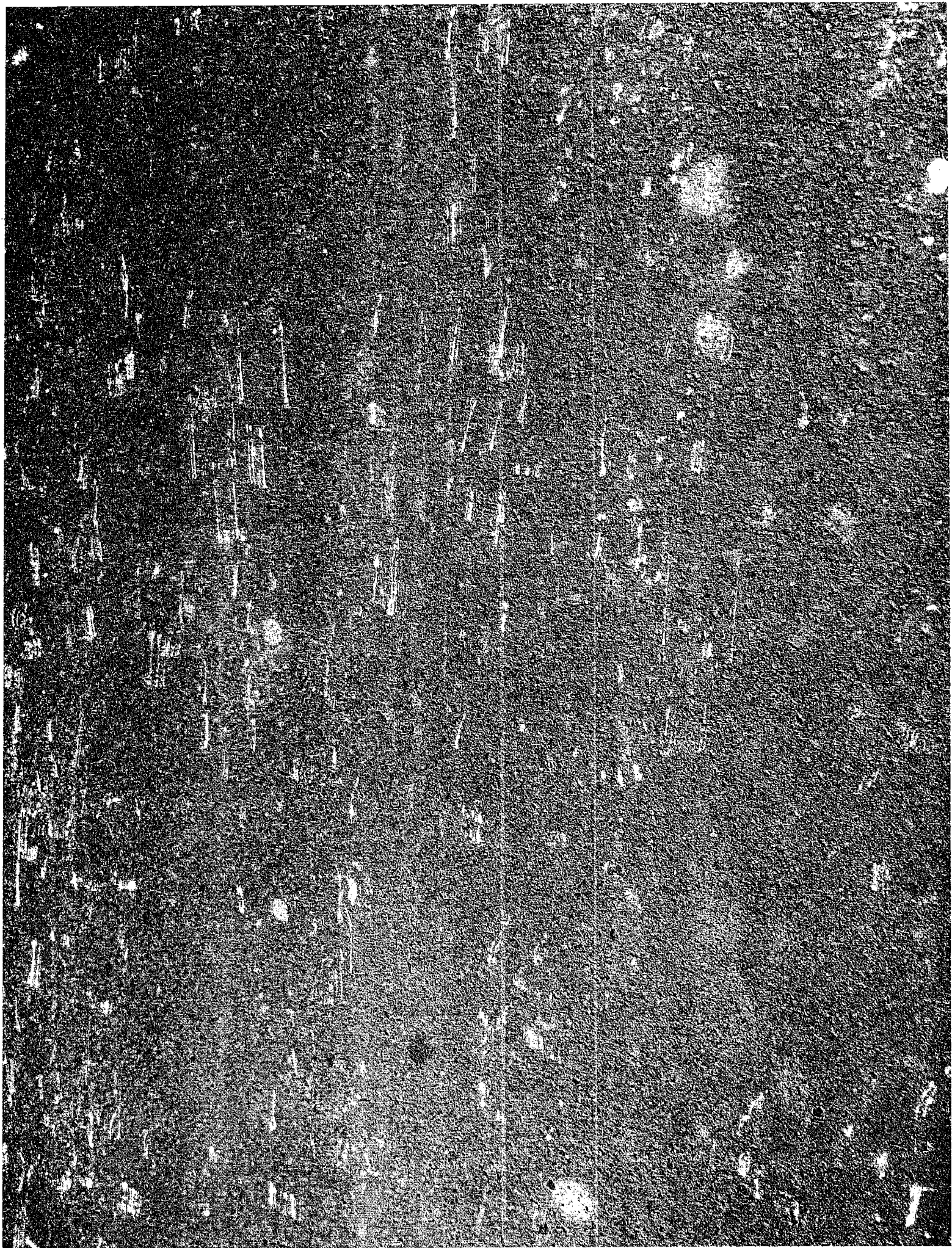
I'd like to assure the members of the committee that this is a real problem that needs to be addressed. I'd like to encourage support of AB697, which makes an attempt to address the issue. I personally would have liked to see the provisions in the bill taken even further, but understand the need to be sensitive to the needs of the Amish and Mennonite communities, and fully acknowledge the economic impact they have in our county in particular. Again I would like to thank the committee and the committee chair for the opportunity to speak, and would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Randall D. Reeg, City Administrator
administrator@cityofthorp.com







MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
FROM: Jon Johnson - Eau Claire County Highway Commissioner
DATE: January 25th, 2018
SUBJECT: Support of AB 697

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety ,

In Eau Claire County we are currently experiencing accelerated wear as well as damage to highway maintenance and improvement projects. In the attached pictures you can see the damage that is happening due to excessive traction methods being use by animal drawn vehicles.

In the attached pictures you'll see County Highway D and County Highway AF. The County Highway D project is the same maintenance project that was completed on County Highway AF. From the pictures you can see the difference in damage to a highway that are caused by animal drawn vehicles. The maintenance cost to sealcoat one mile of rural county highway is \$17,000.00. The cost to re-apply a fog seal of oil is \$3,500.00 per mile.

For the County Highway CF project the new asphalt surface has been damaged to the point where 70% of the asphalt surface is damaged. The surface condition is one of the most important factors of highway longevity. The cost to replace the asphalt pavement on this county highway is \$185,000.00 per mile.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Johnson
Eau Claire County Highway Commissioner

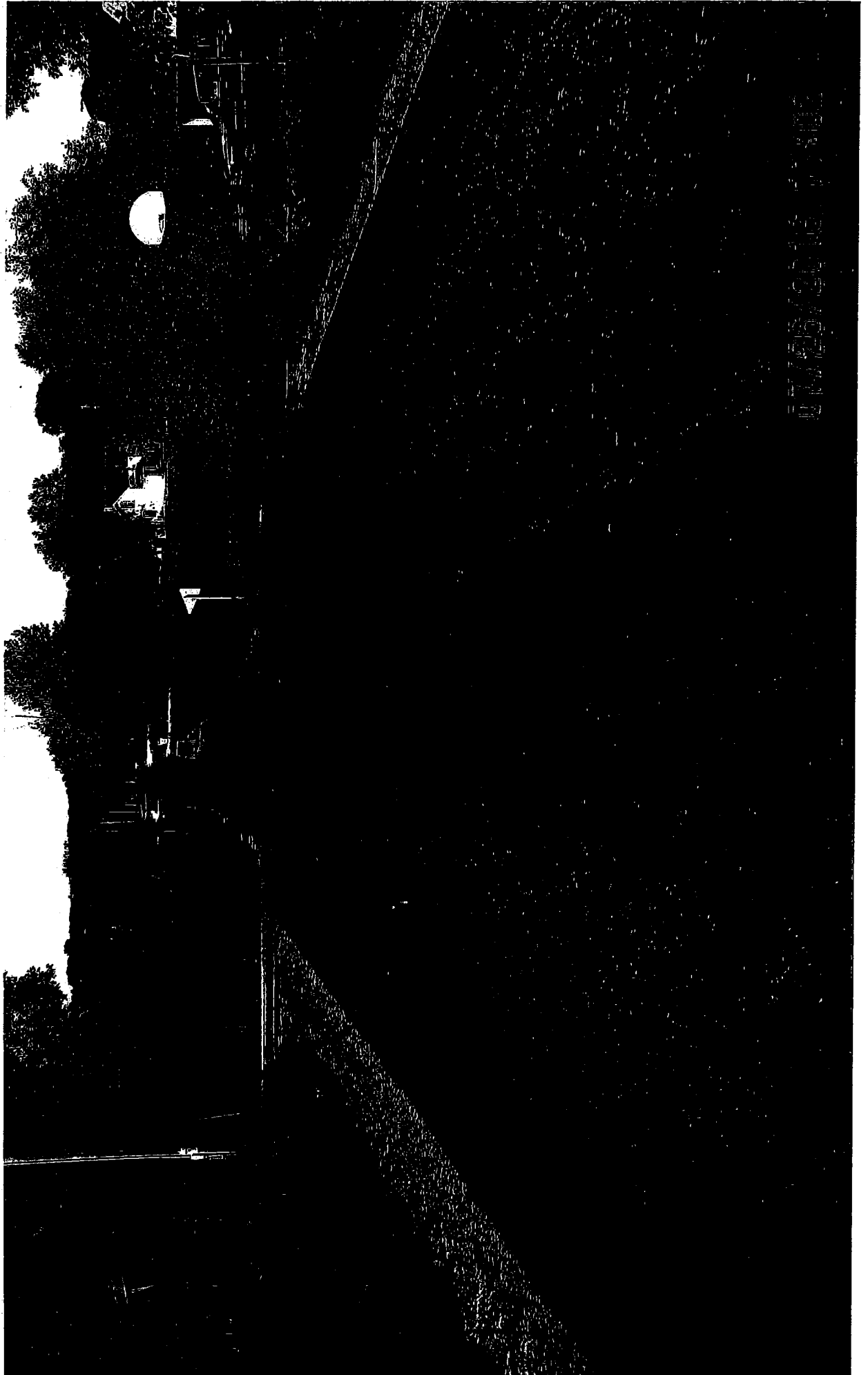
County Highway D - 2018 Sealcoat, No Animal Drawn Vehicle Traffic



County Highway AF - 2018 Sealcoat, With Animal Drawn Vehicle
Traffic



County Highway CF - Eau Claire County; New Construction 2016 - Damage to Asphalt Surface

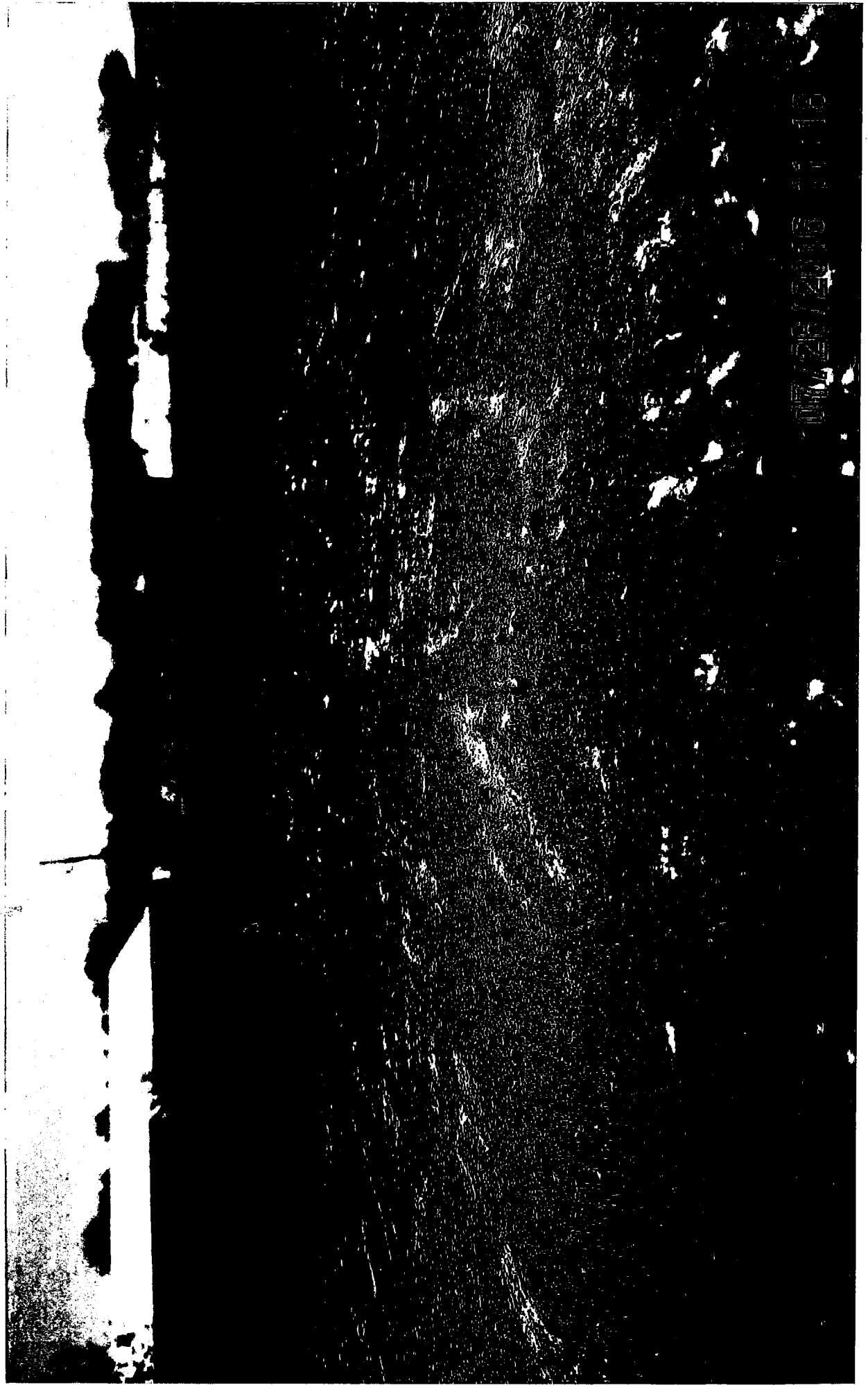


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County Highway CF - Eau Claire County; New Construction 2016 Damage to Asphalt Surface



County Highway CF - Eau Claire County; New Construction 2016 Damage to Asphalt Surface



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