



TOM TIFFANY

STATE SENATOR • 12TH SENATE DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 638 Senate Committee on Transportation and Veteran Affairs January 30th, 2018

Thank you Chairman Petrowski and members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Veteran Affairs for hearing Senate Bill 638 related to vehicle weight limits on highways in Ashland and Vilas County.

Within 11 miles of the Michigan-Wisconsin border, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) has the ability to issue a 164,000 lbs on 11 axel Border Permit. Originally created in 1997, the Border Permit allows expanded weights to be carried on 11 axel trucks carrying raw forest products, lumber or forestry biomass. In 2013 lumber yards and saw mills in northern Wisconsin were struggling to get raw forest products. Wisconsin, with its lower weight limits, was at a distinct disadvantage than its neighboring state. In response, our office asked DOT to identify possible routes for expanding the Border Permit past the 11 mile limit.

The legislature has expanded the Border Permit to include five other routes. In 2013 Wisconsin Act 20, the 2013-15 Biennial Budget Act, expanded Michigan Border Permits beyond the 11 mile border to additional routes DOT identified that could handle the additional weight. The 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, the 2015-17 Biennial Budget Act, again expanded the routes of which a Michigan Border Permit could be issued for to a total of five routes. 2017 Wisconsin Act 59, the 2017-19 Biennial Budget Act, expanded the routes on two additional highways. Unfortunately a drafting error created a new permit section instead of adding these routes to the already established Michigan Border Permit section. This bill will correct the drafting error and move the two additional routes to the current five previously approved routes.

Again, thank you members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Veteran Affairs for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 638. I would appreciate your support.

Thank you.

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**Testimony for Senate Bill 638
Senate Committee on Transportation and Veteran Affairs
January 30th, 2018**

Thank you members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Veteran Affairs for hearing Senate Bill 638 related to vehicle weight limits on highways in Ashland and Vilas County.

This bill is a technical fix to the 2017 Wisconsin Act 59, the Biennial Budget. A provision in the Biennial Budget Act created a new permit group for these two highways unintentionally leaving the DOT without the ability to issue Michigan Border Permits to those routes. Along 11 miles of the Michigan-Wisconsin border the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) has the ability to issue Border Permits. Created in 1997, the Michigan Truck Permits allow trucks carrying raw forest products, lumber or forestry biomass weighing 160,000lbs on 9 axels. Wisconsin, with its lower weight limits, was at a distinct disadvantage than the neighboring state. In preparation for expanding the Michigan Border Permits in 2013, the DOT was asked to examine a number of routes across northern Wisconsin to determine if additional weight could be managed.

In 2013 Wisconsin Act 20, the 2013-15 Biennial Budget Act, expanded Michigan Border Permits to additional routes DOT identified that the roads could handle the additional weight. The 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, the 2015-17 Biennial Budget Act, again expanded the routes of which a Michigan Border Permit could be issued for a total of five routes. The 2017 Wisconsin Act 59, the 2017-19 Biennial Budget Act, expanded the routes on two additional highways. Unfortunately, due to a drafting error the creation of a new permit section instead of adding routes that were established in the Michigan Border Permit section. This bill will correct the drafting error and move the two additional routes to the current five previously approved routes.

Thank you, for hearing testimony in favor of SB 638.

Rob Swearigen
Wisconsin State Assembly
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