



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

TO: Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economy and Small Business Development

FROM: State Representative Nancy VanderMeer

DATE: November 28, 2023

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 569

Thank you Chairman Gundrum for holding a hearing on AB 569 today and thank you committee members for being here. The bill before you today is a bill, frankly, I wish I did not have to put forward. The issue addressed in the proposal is a problem that a constituent that owns a driver's school in Tomah, WI, brought to my attention about a year ago. Earlier this year, I brought this issue to the attention of the Department of Transportation (DOT) and their Secretary's Office. Although Secretary Thompson seemed receptive to at least looking at the issue, for the better part of this year, I've unsuccessfully attempted to get an explanation from the department regarding the utility of current statutes, put into place decades ago, that govern the locations of driver's schools.

As laid out in the Legislative Reference Bureau Analysis on the bill, current law provides that a driver school may not be established within 1,500 feet of a Department of Transportation office where operator's licenses are issued or official driving skills tests are given. This bill would eliminate that prohibition. Also at issue for me and in the bill is what seems to be an arbitrary prohibition in current DOT administrative rules that prevent a driver school from soliciting business within 1,500 feet of a DOT Office where operator's driving skills tests are given. Included in those rules is a caveat that the prohibition does not apply if the municipality where the Department of Transportation office is located has a population of less than 10,000 and the business district in which the DOT office is located is less than 1,500 feet long. As you can see, this bill modifies, but does not eliminate, the exception from 10,000 to 15,000, and eliminates the business district requirement.

Prior to introducing this bill, DOT was unable or unwilling to address related inquiries or provide an explanation for why they support current law and administrative code. As you may have had a chance to review, the DOT Secretary's Office offered some comments on the bill as it is currently is drafted. In those comments, they do mention that, "Section 2 of this bill modifying Trans 105.06(5)(b), accurately addresses the concern that had been raised by the constituent we had met with." The constituent referenced is the individual that brought this concern to my attention. It's my goal to address my constituent's concern *and* obtain more information from the department at this time. Again, than you for the opportunity for a public hearing on this proposal.