February 2, 2017

Chairman Proehl and members of the House Committee on Transportation:

The Kansas Soybean Association and the Soy Transportation Coalition respectfully encourage your support for allowing six axle, 90,000 lbs. semis to operate on state and local roads within Kansas. Research supports doing so would result in enhanced motorist safety, diminished wear and tear on our state's roads, reduced carbon emissions, and greater efficiency of transporting soybeans, grain, and other freight.

While the proposed truck configurations will permit more freight to be transported per semi, the size and maximum allowable length of the truck will not increase. A semi will simply be allowed to utilize a higher percentage of its available capacity.

Research highlights that adding a sixth axle to the above weight configurations will create additional braking capacity so that stopping distances will be less than a five axle, 80,000 lbs. truck.

Moreover, allowing such semis will result in fewer large trucks on the road compared to maintaining an 80,000 lbs. weight limit, which will result in fewer motorist accidents and injuries. Research validates that motorist safety is strongly a function of the number of semis over a given stretch of road. Allowing such semis will result in a decrease in truck density – resulting in an increase in motorist safety.

The six axle, 90,000 lbs. semis will result in a reduction of weight per tire to a five axle, 80,000 lbs. semi – reducing wear and tear on Kansas roads. In addition, the proposed configurations are compliant with the weight restrictions instituted by the Federal Highway Administration's Federal Bridge Formula.

Because railroads have emphasized long haul service over the past 30 years, farmers and grain handlers must increasingly utilize trucking to access the rail network. Given how trucking and rail are less interchangeable, the potential modal shift from rail to trucking due to the adoption of the proposed configurations is significantly limited.

For transporting soybeans and soy products, allowing the proposed semi configurations will result in fewer truck trips, fewer gallons of fuel consumed, fewer tons of carbon dioxide emissions, and reduced fuel costs.
We encourage you to support this proposal that we believe will enhance safety and efficiency on our roads and bridges.

Sincerely,

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