

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE SUPPORTS LEGISLATION TO WAIVE COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE
FOR FARMERS AND FARM RELATED BUSINESS VEHICLES

WASHINGTON - KANSAS SENATOR BOB DOLE TODAY COSPONSORED LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TODAY ON THE SENATE FLOOR THAT WOULD PERMIT STATES TO WAIVE APPLICATION OF THE COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE FOR FARM VEHICLES. THE MEASURE WAS PASSED TWICE BY THE SENATE LAST YEAR, BUT FAILED TO GAIN APPROVAL IN THE HOUSE.

THE LEGISLATION WOULD PERMIT STATES TO WAIVE APPLICATION OF THE COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT OF 1986 WITH RESPECT TO VEHICLES USED TO TRANSPORT FARM SUPPLIES FROM RETAIL DEALERS TO OR FROM A FARM, TO VEHICLES USED FOR CUSTOM HARVESTING, AND TO VEHICLES USED TO TRANSPORT LIVESTOCK FEED, WHETHER OR NOT SUCH VEHICLES ARE CONTROLLED OR OPERATED BY THE FARMER.

THE FOLLOWING IS SENATOR DOLE'S STATEMENT:

NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION GAVE STATES THE AUTHORITY TO WAIVE COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE REQUIREMENTS FOR FARM VEHICLES UNDER THE COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT. UNFORTUNATELY, DOT DID NOT RECOGNIZE WHEN GRANTING THIS WAIVER THAT THE MAJORITY OF THESE PARTICULAR SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL SHIPMENTS WERE CARRIED OUT BY AGRICULTURAL RETAIL OUTLETS, NOT NECESSARILY BY FARMERS.

DOT FAILED TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CUSTOM HARVESTING INDUSTRY, WHICH MANY FARMERS RELY UPON TO HARVEST A SEASONAL, PERISHABLE CROP. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR LIVESTOCK FEED OPERATIONS WHICH PROVIDE A VALUABLE, COST EFFECTIVE SERVICE FOR FARMERS. THESE INDUSTRIES ARE MARKEDLY DIFFERENT THAN THE COMMERCIAL TRUCKING INDUSTRY. MOST OF THE DRIVING IS DONE OFF-PAVEMENT. THEY DIFFER FROM OTHER FOR-HIRE CARRIERS BECAUSE THEY ONLY PROVIDE THE INITIAL TRANSPORTATION OF GRAIN FROM THE FIELD TO STORAGE, OR TO MARKET, OR TO FEEDLOTS. THESE TRUCKS AVERAGE 15,000 PER YEAR AND SIMPLY CANNOT BE CONSIDERED IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS COMMERCIAL, LONG-HAUL TRUCKING OPERATIONS.

FARMERS ARE CURRENTLY FACING SERIOUS ECONOMIC HARDSHIP WITH INCREASING OPERATION AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS. THIS BILL IS NOT AN EXEMPTION FROM COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE REQUIREMENTS, RATHER IT IS A COMMON SENSE APPROACH TO GIVE STATES WITH AN EXCELLENT SAFETY RECORD IN THE AREA THE ABILITY TO SET REASONABLE REQUIREMENTS FOR FARM VEHICLES.

IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT THIS MEASURE IS DESPERATELY NEEDED IN FARM COUNTRY. IT IS QUITE PROBABLE, IF THIS MEASURE IS NOT ADOPTED IN CONGRESS, THAT CROPS WILL GO UNHARVESTED, FARMERS WILL FIND THEMSELVES SHORT OF NEEDED SUPPLIES, AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS WILL FIND THEMSELVES IN TROUBLE WHEN IT COMES TO SECURING ADEQUATE FEED SUPPLIES AS WELL.

I ENCOURAGE MY COLLEAGUES IN THE HOUSE, WHERE THIS MEASURE HAS MET REPEATED RESISTANCE, TO PASS THIS NEEDED LEGISLATION.

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