

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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CONTACT: WALT RIKER
(202) 224-5358

DOLE BACKS COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE WAIVER MEASURE
FOR CUSTOM HARVESTERS; APPROVED BY SENATE

WASHINGTON - SENATOR BOB DOLE (R-KS) ANNOUNCED THAT THE SENATE APPROVED A DOLE-SPONSORED MEASURE WHICH WOULD ALLOW 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 MEASURE WAS ADDED AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION BILL, CURRENTLY UNDER DEBATE IN THE SENATE.

"THE SENATE HAS APPROVED THIS WAIVER BILL NOT KNOWING THE PROSPECT ABOUT WHAT LIES AHEAD IN THE HOUSE. HAVING BLOCKED THIS COMMON SENSE LEGISLATION ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, I HOPE THAT FARM STATE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SEE THAT THIS LEGISLATION IS APPROVED," SAID DOLE.

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 MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT. UNFORTUNATELY, DOT DID NOT RECOGNIZE WHEN GRANTING THIS WAIVER THAT THE MAJORITY OF THESE PARTICULAR SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES 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 COST-EFFECTIVE SERVICE FOR FARMERS AND CATTLE PRODUCERS," ADDED DOLE.

THESE INDUSTRIES ARE MARKEDLY DIFFERENT FROM COMMERCIAL TRUCKING OPERATIONS. 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 MILES PER YEAR AND CAN NOT BE CONSIDERED IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS COMMERCIAL, LONG HAUL TRUCKING OPERATIONS.

"FARMERS FACE ENOUGH OF AN ECONOMIC HARDSHIP WITHOUT NEEDLESSLY INCREASING OPERATION AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS. THIS MEASURE IS NOT AN EXEMPTION FROM COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE REQUIREMENTS, RATHER IT IS A COMMON SENSE APPROACH TO GIVE STATES THE ABILITY TO SET REASONABLE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRIVERS OF FARM VEHICLES -- WHO HAVE AN EXCELLENT SAFETY RECORD. IT IS QUITE PROBABLE THAT IF THIS MEASURE IS NOT ADOPTED, CROPS WILL GO UNHARVESTED, FARMERS WILL FIND THEMSELVES SHORT OF NEEDED SUPPLIES, AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS WILL FIND THEMSELVES UNABLE TO SECURE ADEQUATE FEED SUPPLIES."

"THIS MEASURE HAS MORE SUPPORT TODAY THAN IT EVER HAS. AS WE ENDEAVOR TO PASS THIS FOR THE THIRD TIME IN TWO YEARS, I CALL ON MY COLLEAGUES IN THE HOUSE TO PASS THIS MEASURE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE."

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