



JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Senate Bill 198

May 3, 2017

Good morning, members of the committee, and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Senate Bill 198, which makes two changes to heavy truck weight allowances in order to bring state regulations in line with recent federal changes.

First, as you may know, many semi-trucks now operate special technology to provide heating or cooling needs for the truck and/or trailer, thereby reducing the need to idle the truck's main engine to provide power for these tasks when the vehicle is not in motion. To incentivize its use, heavy vehicles with this technology may exceed statutory weight limits by 400 pounds, or the weight of the idle reduction technology, whichever is less. This bill increases that exception to 550 pounds.

Second, there has been recent interest in utilizing natural gas for transportation fuel, largely due to its relatively low cost and reduced emissions. Retrofit systems and storage tanks, however, can be complex and add additional weight to the vehicle. This bill would allow vehicles fueled primarily by natural gas to exceed statutory weight limits by an amount equal to the difference between the weight of the natural gas fuel system and a comparable diesel fuel system or 2,000 pounds, whichever is less.

While these provisions are currently in place for the federal highways, harmonizing state regulations with the federal changes will contribute to consistent enforcement, as well as certainty for interstate carriers and those operating on state and local roadways.

It should be noted that the increased weight exception for natural gas fuel systems apply only to non-permitted vehicles. Oversize and overweight vehicles, as well as implements of husbandry, remain subject to the maximum weight designated by each permit. In addition, vehicles remain subject to posted bridge weight limits and local postings.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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WMC

WISCONSIN MANUFACTURERS & COMMERCE

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs

**FROM: Jason Culotta
Senior Director of Government Relations**

DATE: May 3, 2017

RE: Support for Senate Bill 198

Thank you for the opportunity to share comments with you today about Senate Bill 198, federalizing weight exemptions for natural gas vehicles (NGVs) operating on the state highway system.

Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) is the state chamber of commerce and largest general business association in Wisconsin. We were founded more than 100 years ago, and are proud to represent approximately 3,800 member companies of all sizes, and from every sector of our economy. Our mission is to make Wisconsin the most competitive state in the nation in which to do business.

A range of companies in the paper, food processing, and waste industries are seeking the addition of 2,000 pounds provided for the federal highway system as an overweight truck exemption for natural gas vehicles operating on state highways.

This language was first adopted in the Section 1410 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act of 2015 (the FAST Act). The federal law also provides up to 550 pounds of a separate weight exemption for the use of idle reduction technology.

State highways are subject to state, not federal, law, and until the state passes NGV weight exemption regulation, the federal weight exemption does not apply on state highways. States that have subsequently adopted these standards for their own highway system include Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, and Virginia.

WMC urges your support for Senate Bill 198.