Better Trucks Initiative

Improving Safety, Reducing Pavement Impact, Easing Enforcement, Lowering Taxpayer Costs

Problem:

- Current legal maximum load for semi-trailer trucks is ten tons per axle, not to exceed 80,000 pounds Gross Vehicle Weight, on five-axle trucks using 10-ton routes.
- Because of the cost related to this weight limitation, every year the Minnesota Legislature considers exemptions, exceptions, and special provisions for individual industries. There is now a patchwork of acceptable loads.
- This complexity in weight laws, inconsistencies among jurisdictions and inequalities across industries, adds cost for haulers, reduces compliance and complicates law enforcement for local, county and state authorities.
- The practice in states bordering Minnesota is to allow higher weights on comparable roads. There is a need to be more consistent from state to state, to help increase Minnesota's competitiveness and support economic growth.
- Minnesota is losing out on opportunities to draw more distribution facilities to the state, a priority for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).
- The largest users of aggregate material are state and local government, and the most expensive part of aggregate production is delivery to the site. Hauling smaller loads requires more trips and increases the overall cost of road and construction projects.
- A growing economy has resulted in a shortage of drivers with Commercial Driver's Licenses. Also, new federal "hours of service" rules restrict how many consecutive hours in a week that a driver can operate a truck. Allowing better, more efficient trucks that can carry 20 percent more material per load will reduce costs for end-users of trucked material, including taxpayers.

Proposal:

- Allow six- or seven-axle trucks in Minnesota to haul 90,000 pound or 97,000 pound loads, regardless of load type. Semi-trailer length would not change from the current standard of 53 feet. The public would not see any visible change to trucks currently on the road.
- The law is permissive. Local and state officials would have full discretion to grant annual permits for trucks to operate on roads within their jurisdiction. State permit fee revenues are spent to increase the frequency of inspection on local bridges, and for road and bridge sign postings on the local system. Permits are revocable for violations of the terms of the permit.
- According to the MnDOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Study, these proposed truck configurations are safer and less impactful on roads than what is permitted under current law.

Supporters of the Better Trucks Initiative

Construction/Materials Associations
Aggregate and Ready Mix Association of Minnesota
Associated General Contractors of Minnesota
Minnesota Asphalt Paving Association
Concrete Paving Association of Minnesota
Northwestern Lumber Association

Chambers of Commerce
Greater Mankato Growth
Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce
Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce
St Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
St Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
Metro North Chamber of Commerce
Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce
Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce

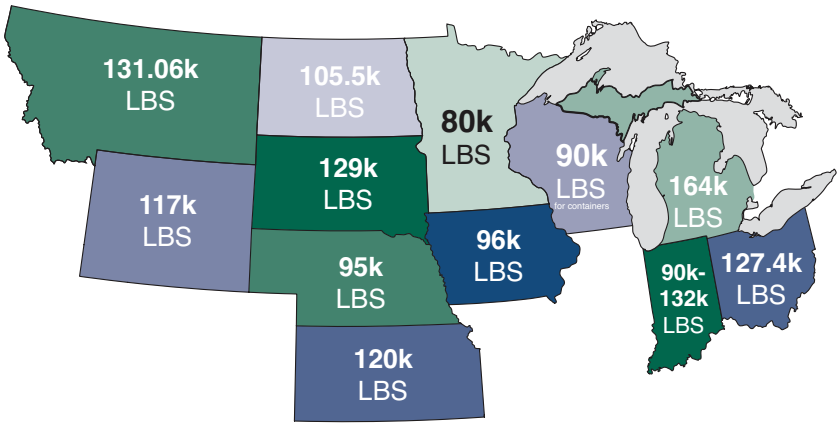
Food, Agriculture and Rural Minnesota Advocates
Cooperative Network
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association
Gold'n Plump Corporation
Minnesota Agri-Growth Council
Grocery Manufacturers Association

Local Government Associations
North Metro Mayors' Association

AGGREGATE & READY MIX
ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA

September 2014

Minnesota is not Competitive with Other States



Map reflects maximum statutory loads allowed in each state without an overweight/non-divisible load permit.
Data collected by ARM of Minnesota, 2/13/2013

MnDOT 2006 Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study

Study Notes and Findings:

- **The Purpose of the Study was to Determine the Public's Best Interest.**

  "… the principles [for the study] provided that any changes would: be in concert with Federal law, seek to protect highway infrastructure and safety, provide benefit to Minnesota's industries and economy, promote ease and uniformity of application, and seek to cover costs imposed on the system."

- **The Study Was Thorough.** MnDOT undertook a thorough study, with 35 outreach meetings with 140 stakeholders. These Include:

  MN Shortline & Regional Rail Assn, Class 1 Railroads, the Aggregate and Ready-Mix Assn of MN, MN Grain and Feed Industry, Mn Chamber of Commerce, Rural Electric Association, Soybean Growers, Pork Producers, Sugar Beet Industry, Associated General Contractors, AAA of Iowa and MN, Forest Products/Timber Producers and Associated Contract Loggers, MN Utility Contractors, Coalition Against Big Trucks, MN Trucking Association, Dairy Cooperatives, MN Farm Bureau, MN County and City Engineers Association Joint Legislative Committee, County Engineers of MN, MN Legislative Staff, MN Transportation Alliance

- **The Study is Reliable.** MnDOT used nationally-accepted methods and transportation metrics that are used by the National Academy of Sciences and the USDOT. The study was Peer Reviewed.

- I**ncreasing Truck Axles and Weights will Save Taxpayer Money.** Compared to standard five-axle, 90,000 lb. trucks, seven-axle, 97,000 lb. trucks reduce road damage by 37 percent!

- **Bridges are a Concern.** While most bridges in the 10-ton state and county system can handle heavier weights, some older bridges are a concern. The Better Trucks Initiative includes annual fee revenue that would be used by MnDOT to increase their inspections of all of the state's bridges. Also, road authorities have complete discretion to grant permits, including closing a route with a limited bridge. Permits are renewable annually.

- **MnDOT Projects Fewer Crashes With these Changes.** Due to the efficiency of these trucks, they will travel fewer miles to deliver the same payload.

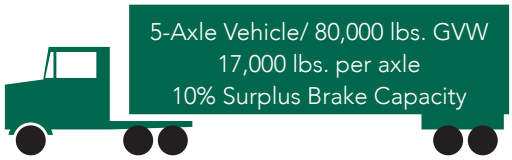
- **A Truck's Weight Has No Bearing on the Severity of Accidents.** The MnDOT report quotes the National Academy of Sciences – Transportation Research Board safety finding:

  "The severity of truck accidents is not sensitive to a truck configuration; and given that a truck accident occurs, the probability of fatalities or injuries are not sensitive to changes in truck weight."

Better Trucks Initiative

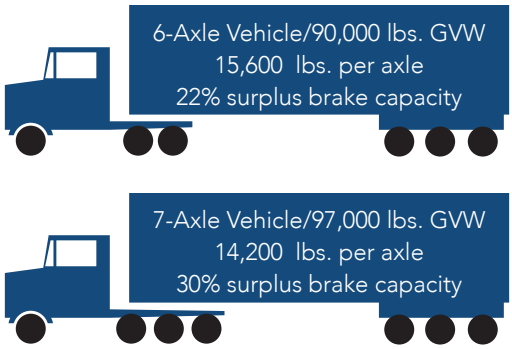
Axle Weight Reduction Proposal

Current Law (53-foot Trailer, All load types)



Current Law for Certain Agricultural and Timber Loads, with permit

Better Trucks Initiative Proposal would remove load types restriction



5-axle/80,000 vs. 7-axle/97,000
21% increase in carrying capacity
37% reduction in road damage

*All data from MnDOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study

USDOT Studying Heavy Trucks

MAP-21 Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study