

HCS HB 388 -- LIVESTOCK AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

SPONSOR: Hoskins

COMMITTEE ACTIONS: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Agriculture Policy by a vote of 17 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Agriculture by a vote of 9 to 1.

Currently, local log trucks and local log truck tractors may only transport harvested forest products within a 100-mile radius of the forested site. This bill increases the distance in which the trucks can be operated to a 200-mile radius.

Currently, the total gross weight of a vehicle or combination of vehicles hauling milk from a farm to a processing facility in the state cannot exceed 85,500 pounds with the exception of vehicles operated on the Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways. The bill adds livestock to the current weight limit exemption for milk haulers and allows vehicles hauling livestock to carry up to 85,500 pounds on all state highways other than the interstate system with the specified exception.

The bill allows any vehicle or combination of vehicles hauling grain or grain co-products during times of harvest to exceed the maximum allowable weight limitations by up to 10% on highways other than the interstate highway system. This provision must not apply to vehicles operating on the Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill provides equity throughout the state and helps Missouri be more competitive with other states that have increased weight limits for trucks. It is also cost-efficient for livestock producers by allowing them to increase the number of livestock that can be transported at one time.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hoskins; Poultry Federation; Missouri Corn Growers Association; Missouri Forest Products Association; Missouri Soybean Association; Missouri Farm Bureau; and David Dick, Missouri Cattleman's Association.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the increased weight limits will shorten the life of the state roads and bridges. Many of the bridges on the state roads cannot support the increased weight limits.

Testifying against the bill was Dennis Heckman, Department of Transportation.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the railroad companies are one of the largest taxpayers in the state and the increased weight limits will not only deteriorate the roads but the railroad crossings, as well. The railroads will have to pay to repair the crossings due to the damage caused by the heavier trucks.

Testifying on the bill was BNSF Railway Company and Missouri Railroad Association.