

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

REGARDING SENATE BILL 17

January 29, 2024

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

I am Joel Skelley, Director of Policy for the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). I am here today to provide testimony about Senate Bill 17. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and to provide comments.

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) purpose is to “deliver transportation that keeps Kansans moving forward”. The agency works every day to maintain a transportation network that provides for safe and efficient transportation to all Kansans including the agricultural industry. KDOT opposes Senate Bill 17 (SB 17) because the provisions are redundant with existing Kansas statutes.

SB 17 adds exceptions to gross weight limits for vehicles as specified in K.S.A. 8-1909. This bill provides exceptions to “...haulers of grain or other seasonally harvested products during normal harvest season from the field where such grain or products are harvested to storage, market or stockpile or from stockpile to market or factory up to 50 miles...” The bill allows such loads to be up to 10% heavier than the maximum gross weight indicated in the table in K.S.A. 8-1909 for loads with tandem, triple or quad axles. It also allows such loads to be up to 12.5% heavier than the maximum gross weight indicated in the table for loads with single axles. The maximum gross weight authorized by this bill would be 90,000 pounds. None of the above provisions would apply to the interstate highway system. Currently under K.S.A. 8-1919 farmers and commercial haulers can obtain an “Annual Ag Permit” to transport divisible agricultural loads exceeding 85,500 pounds with a vehicle that has six or more axles. K.S.A. 8-1919 addresses the exceptions being sought in SB 17 as follows:

- K.S.A. 8-1919 provides the ability to haul a wide range of agricultural products, including agricultural inputs, farm supplies, biofuels, feed, *raw or processed agricultural commodities*, livestock, raw meat products intended by the shipper for further processing
- K.S.A. 8-1919 allows permitted vehicles to be transported any distance within the state.
- K.S.A. 8-1919 allows permitted vehicles to travel throughout the year, not just during normal harvest season.

- K.S.A. 8-1919 limits vehicles to a gross weight of 90,000 pounds.
- K.S.A. 8-1919 does not allow vehicles over 80,000 pounds to be operated on the interstate highway system.

The Annual Ag Permit has been Kansas Law since 2017. Over the last 5 years the agency has issued an average of 2228 permits annually. The cost for an operator to obtain this annual permit is \$200 per truck, allowing them to transport as many loads as needed within the state of Kansas on the state highway system, excluding the interstate highway system. The revenue generated from these permits goes into the State Highway Fund for investment into the state highway system.

The agency is willing to work with stakeholders to educate and inform about the annual permit as a solution to this concern. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 17.