

Chairman and Committee Members

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today. I am commissioner Stan McEvoy from Decatur County in the Northwest corner of the state. We are a county with less than 2,800 people with a limited work force available. I will try to keep this short and to the point.

I am writing in support of HB 2295 exempting motor grader operators from having to obtain a CDL license. The Decatur County Commissioners all agree that this is an unnecessary requirement that adds an additional burden to hiring and keeping employees. It is also an added expense to the county. We believe HB 2295 would be a positive change for all counties, but especially for smaller counties.

We do not feel that a motor grader operator needs to have a CDL to operate the equipment. There are many 14 and 15 year old farm kids driving tractors, combines and much larger equipment that travel much faster than a motor grader. They are not required to have any license at all. A motor grader moves much slower and is hardly ever on a highway. A CDL does not teach an operator how to run the motor grader. A CDL is geared more for truck drivers which we have plenty of. We teach and fully instruct the employees on how to run and operate the motor graders ourselves before they are allowed to hit the roads.

To our knowledge there is only one place in the state for an employee can get a CDL for a motor grader and that is in Beloit. This where the major expense comes in for counties. We have to send them to a school in Beloit for a CDL class. We have money in the cost of sending the employee there. We have travel, lodging as it is not just a one day training, cost of the training itself, loss of that employee working back home and the scheduling headaches as we are usually always low on road and bridge employees. It is like a revolving door.

The problems continue after that which results in lost time, training and money. You can pickup a paper in Northwest Kansas and see every county is looking for road and bridge employees. There is even more ads for truck drivers. The counties hire an employee, we train them, send them off to get their CDL and a month or two later they quit. They find a better job after we have taken care of all their expenses of getting a CDL. This is a constant reality counties face daily as we are unable to pay the wages an employee may get to drive a truck for another employer. We have to respect a persons right to make more money if they can.

We know we have to have truck drivers with CDL's. We however would not have to send everyone to get a CDL if there was not the requirement for motor grader operators to have one. Those employees could easily run other equipment and not drive a truck. Many of the employees do not want to drive a truck. They just want to run the equipment and are very happy doing it.

In conclusion removing the requirement for motor grader operators to have a CDL would be a major help and save a lot of money and time for county governments. HB 2295 makes a lot of sense and the Decatur County Commissioners hope the committee and legislature will agree with us. I appreciate your understanding and consideration.

Respectfully,

Stan McEvoy
District 1 Decatur County Commissioner

