

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1117

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**As Passed House:**  
March 10, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to the highway weight limit for farm implements.

**Brief Description:** Modifying provisions for the transport of farm implements on highways.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Ericksen, Linville, Newhouse, Buri, Strow and B. Sullivan).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Transportation: 1/24/05, 3/5/05 [DPS].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 3/10/05, 95-0.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Increases the highway weight limit for farm implements that transport dairy nutrients.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Wallace, Vice Chair; Woods, Ranking Minority Member; Skinner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Buck, Campbell, Curtis, Dickerson, Ericksen, Hankins, Hudgins, Jarrett, Kilmer, Lovick, Morris, Nixon, Rodne, Sells, Shabro, Simpson, B. Sullivan, Takko, Upthegrove and Wood.

**Staff:** Teresa Berntsen (786-7301).

**Background:**

Current law exempts farm implements that weigh less than 45,000 pounds, are 70 feet long or less, and 14 feet wide or less from state highway weight and size limits. In order to travel on a state highway, the overweight or oversize farm implement must be patrolled, flagged, lighted, and signed. Violation of this law is a traffic infraction.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

Directs the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to work with the federal government, local transportation authorities, transportation agencies in other states, and legislative members and/or staff to conduct a study regarding overweight farming vehicles.

Until such a study and any subsequent law or rule changes are enacted:

Certain farm implements that weigh up to 105,500 pounds used to transport dairy nutrients in order to comply with the Dairy Nutrient Management Act may travel on city or county roads, under certain conditions. A city or county road authority may restrict the movement of such vehicles.

The Legislature requests that the United States Department of Transportation allow certain farm implements to travel on Washington highways under rules or policies established by the WSDOT.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** The State of Washington passed the Dairy Nutrient Management Act in 1998, which requires farmers to have plans to remove dairy nutrients during certain times of the year and to dispose of by spreading over a field or other methods. Many of the trucks used to remove and spread the manure over fields are overweight. This activity is intermittent. Agriculture is a vital economic interest. A solution must be found in order for farmers to stay in business.

**Testimony Against:** The current gross weight limit is 105,500 pounds for non-reducible loads. By allowing a load over this weight on federal-aid roads, this bill could put federal highway dollars in jeopardy. The weight limits could cause damage to bridges and roadways and lead to safety issues.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Ericksen, prime sponsor; Representative Linville; Dick Benuen, Benuen Farms; Roger Bajema, Dairy Farm; John Stuhlmiller, Washington State Farm Bureau; and Chris Cheney, Dairy/Poultry Group.

(Opposed) Tim Erickson, Washington State Department of Transportation; Scott Merriman, Association of Counties; and Jeff Devere, Washington State Patrol.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.