

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 1117-S

April 20, 2005

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,
The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning, without my approval as to Section 2, Substitute House Bill 1117 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to the highway weight limit for farm implements."

This legislation requires the Washington state Department of Transportation to study the issue of enabling Washington state farms to operate in an economically feasible manner while following federal and state laws and protecting state roads and highways.

The bill also permits overweight farm implements transporting dairy nutrients, in order to comply with the Dairy Nutrient Management Act, to travel over city and county roads. Cities and counties may enact restrictions on the movement of these farm implements.

Farming and the maintenance of our streets and roads are both vital economic interests in our state. I recognize that our farmers are faced with many challenges as they try to operate efficiently and profitably, while complying with environmental and transportation regulations. The economic impact of stricter transportation regulations on our farmers is an issue that needs to be resolved. I am vetoing, therefore, only the emergency clause in the bill (Section 2) to give our local jurisdictions time to take whatever actions they deem necessary to best protect their streets and roads. I view this legislation as a temporary solution. I fully expect the Department's study and subsequent recommendations to result in legislation next session that will resolve this issue for both our farmers and local jurisdictions.

We cannot afford to lose our farms; but we also cannot afford to damage our roads and streets in this time of very limited revenue.

For these reasons, I have signed Section 1 and vetoed Section 2 of Substitute House Bill 1117.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine O. Gregoire
Governor