



TESTIMONY OF THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES  
TO THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
ON HB 2242

FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

KAC appreciates the opportunity to offer written testimony in **opposition** to HB 2242.

Kansas counties own and maintain 109,000 miles of roads, which is 82% of all the roads in Kansas. We own and maintain 19,650 bridges, which equals 77% of all the bridges in Kansas.

An adequate and safe rural road system is critical to Kansas agriculture and the Kansas economy in general. Many counties are struggling to adequately maintain the rural road system as they face increases in costs at the same time the county population is decreasing.

Axle weight limits and gross vehicle weight limits have been established to protect pavements, culverts and bridges from overload damage. This bill removes those protections and will result in considerable, additional damage to the rural road infrastructure.

Trucks that haul aggregate and other fill material to construction projects are already exempt from maximum gross weights as defined in K.S.A. 8-1909. This bill would also exempt the same trucks from axle weight limits. The result will be that there will no longer be any weight restrictions on trucks hauling aggregates and fill material. We believe the results will have devastating effect on our road system. Few people realize that small overloads cause considerable road damage; for instance, an overload of just 20% will double the damage to pavements. Any increase in hauling efficiency for the trucker will be offset by increased cost of maintaining the roads and bridges. Another way of looking at this is that trucker profits may increase, but taxpayers at large will have to pay more to repair the additional road damage.

The road infrastructure that is most vulnerable to damage from overloads is blacktop roads and weaker bridges. Bridges and culverts are a special concern because of safety to the driver and the high cost of structural repairs. Bridges and culverts have been designed for truck loads and typical truck axle spacing. Since the 1970s, bridges have been designed based on a truck tractor with trailer consisting of 20,000 lb. front axle and two 34,000 lb. tandem axles. This design is basically the legal load in Kansas as defined in K.S.A. 8-1908, which will be modified by this proposed legislation. All bridges have to be posted with weight limits if they cannot carry the legal load. If there is no legal load limit in Kansas, all bridges will have to have a weight limit sign based on the design loading.

While the proposed exemption only applies to aggregate and dirt being hauled to construction projects, we would contend that almost all aggregate and fill dirt is used in some type of construction project. So we think this limitation of construction projects would be difficult, if not impossible, for law enforcement to implement. Please note that, although the proposed legislation would apply to county projects and county road maintenance, that the counties did not ask for this legislation, and do not think it is in the best interest of the county or our citizen taxpayers.

KAC believes HB 2242 will result in massively overloaded trucks which will increase damage to roads and bridges and therefore adversely affect public safety. We ask that you oppose the legislation.

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