

Dear members of the Joint Committee on Transportation

On behalf of the 6500 farmers and farm family members, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation supports HB 3235 – An act to clarify transportation laws.

Under current provisions, all vehicles carrying loads in excess of certain provisions of the law (essentially 10,000 lbs) must obtain annual permit from the Registry of Motor Vehicles. This requirement is problematic for the agricultural community on several fronts.

First, this requirement prevents farmers and foresters from utilizing farm plates for carrying such loads. Under provisions of the law, farm plates may be transferred from one vehicle to another. Overweight permits are associated with the vehicle rather than the registration. This can greatly complicate the use of farm plates and permits for farming operations with multiple pieces of equipment, often preventing farmers from enjoying the benefits of farm plates.

Second, such permits are prohibited when a load can be reduced with a special irreducible load permit issued in its stead. Agricultural loads are frequently in excess of 10,000 lbs. So, while a farmer may be allowed to carry a 20,000 pound piece of equipment on a trailer, they are not allowed to carry 20,000 pounds of grain or logs on the same trailer.

Finally, this bill would define irreducible load. There is no current statutory definition of irreducible load which has led to some confusion.

Passage of this bill would simply clarify provisions of existing law and ensure that benefits offered by the legislature to the agricultural community through the use of farm plates are fully available as intended. The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation strongly urges you to report favorably on this bill.

Sincerely,

Brad Mitchell, MA Farm Bureau Federation  
Director of Government Relations  
508.881.4766