

Citizen public testimony: HB 2017 & amendments
June 7, 2017

Dear Chairs, Co-Chairs and members of the Joint Transportation Committee on Preservation and Modernization Members,

I can support most increases in vehicle registration fees and other measures included in these amendments to support our failing transportation infrastructure, yet have zero support for one particular condition that would impose registration fees that do not now exist on small lightweight utility trailers.

I can only “guestimate” that there are over 100,000 small utility trailers in our state that citizens own, and this additional fee structure is unreasonable public policy for several reasons:

- Many citizens use these small trailers to haul small items (lawn mowers, barbeques, yard debris) only occasionally on public roads, if that, which does not create a level or frequency of use of our roads that would create road wear or damage;
- Vehicles towing a small trailer would already presumably be subject to substantially increased registration fees plus added gas taxes to operate;
- Some of the cargo in trailers, such as motorcycles, would also presumably be impacted by additional fees to register;
- This concept would add a fairly substantial upfront cost to buying small trailers, and by the definitions of trailer (over 6 feet) I would not even be able to transport my log splitter, for example, to my neighbor’s house without paying dearly for the “privilege”;
- This may create a negative sales impact on businesses that manufacture or sell small utility trailers in the state. Job losses may occur as sales are dampened;
- Creating a substantial addition to the DMV system of collecting previously uncollected fees will become an ongoing expense in the future, one that will have to be increasingly taxpayer supported in the years ahead with little substantive fiscal benefit;
- This provision poses an undue financial burden on lower income or senior citizens on, or who are facing, a fixed income situation;
- While a “sunset” may or may not be viable in the amendments, this state has a frequent history of “extending” or eliminating sunsets on many bills considered favorable for political and/or financial reasons;

- Enforcement of this proposal is highly questionable given the limited resources available for law enforcement activities and personnel. I suspect ‘violations’ would be quite low on a patrol officer’s priority list, unless a grant is issued - at the expense of taxpayers.

For these reasons I cannot support this concept and implore you to remove the additional lightweight utility trailer registration fee provisions and revert back to the length and weight limits that exist in the current law. Those seem reasonable. What is proposed is not.

As it stands now, HB2017 is an absolute “no” vote for our family, and I suspect that this viewpoint would be shared by many other voters in the state who own small trailers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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