



**CITY OF DULUTH
CITY COUNCIL**

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Representative Erik Simonson
429 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Representative Simonson:

I write as a member of the Duluth City Council to urge you to oppose increasing the state truck weight limit above its current level of 80,000 pounds. Such legislation is likely to be introduced during the 2015 legislative session. I oppose an increase in truck weight limits because it will damage our already stressed infrastructure and negatively affect our neighborhoods.

In Duluth we have firsthand knowledge of what larger trucks can do to our streets and neighborhoods. Currently, a weight exemption is in place allowing for 99,000 pound logging trucks to navigate our city streets, rather than travel on I-35 where the federal weight limit is enforced. We have seen large numbers of logging trucks not simply on Superior Street, but also on neighborhood thoroughfares, such as East 3rd Street. (I recently heard from a constituent on E. 3rd Street concerned with the large number of logging trucks passing in front of his home.) This has placed enormous wear and tear on our streets and has created safety, congestion, and noise problems in our neighborhoods.

The city has been hard at work for several years to address the logging truck issue. We have contacted Congressman Nolan as well as our United States Senators and stressed that these large trucks do not belong on our local roads. Raising the maximum weight limit for all trucks would only make matters worse for the city of Duluth by allowing larger trucks of all kinds on our streets.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, there are over 1,000 structurally deficient bridges in Minnesota. Increasing the weight limit will do further damage to our already decaying bridges. These larger trucks also do not pay for themselves. Studies have shown that today's 80,000-pound trucks only pay for 80% of the damage they cause to public infrastructure through permit fees and fuel taxes. Heavier trucks (97,000 pounds or more) would pay an even smaller percentage, requiring taxpayers to subsidize these heavier vehicles. We simply cannot afford to have heavier trucks on our roadways.

Again, I respectfully urge you to oppose legislation that would increase the size or weight of trucks in Minnesota. There is overwhelming evidence that bigger trucks are bad policy – placing undue stress on our roads and bridges while compromising public safety. If you have any questions regarding my position on this important issue, please feel free to contact me.

With best wishes,

Joel Sipress