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We are pleased to see that for the first time in many years you will have the opportunity to help Florida Cattle Ranchers thru supporting improvements in the Transportation bill. It is our understanding that the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, Transportation and the Committee on Environment and Public works will be working on the Highway bill early in 2012.

There are several issues in which our industry supports changes to help our industry across the entire country.

We seek your support of H.R. 763 the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act of 2011 introduced by Congressman Michaud and Congresswoman Schmidt and the Senate version introduced by Senator Crapo S. 747.

These bills allow states the opportunity to increase truck weights to 97,000 pounds with the modification of trailers to include a 6th axle. This additional axle maintains the current weight per axle level with the current standard and will also maintain the same braking capacity.

This will increase hauling capacity and will result in fewer trucks on the roads, leading to less emissions and improved efficiency.

We also request language that will allow the purchase of permits for commercial vehicles to haul farm commodities up to 100,000 pounds.

Frequently, farmers and ranchers operate across state lines in transporting their own equipment and commodities. Therefore we ask that the transportation bill address this by creating a uniform mileage exemption for farm use vehicles exceeding 26,000 pounds.

We need uniformity and reciprocity of farm exemptions across state lines for drivers licenses and we strongly oppose any federal requirement of commercial driver's licenses for farmers and ranchers.

Congressman Sam Graves has introduced H.R. 3265, which waives certain driving restrictions during planting and harvest seasons for producers who are transporting agricultural goods.

Congressman James Lankford has introduced the Farmers' Freedom Act of 2011(H.R. 2414).

This legislation exempts certain farm vehicles (including the individual operating the vehicle) from certain federal requirements (for a commercial driver's license, drug testing, medical certificates and hours of service) governing the operation of motor vehicles.

The Senate version of the Highway Bill in it's present form is less than desirable to the ranching industry and we ask that our Senators work to make improvements and move it to more closely align with the House version.

Some of the elements of the Senate bill that we are uncomfortable with include, a prohibition on the use of double deck trailers to haul horses and potentially other livestock. This proposal has no scientific basis

and would dramatically hinder commerce and movement of livestock. Another provision that is totally unnecessary and unproductive, is a proposed two year study on whether the United States should increase truck weights in order to compete with the rest of the world. These provisions are unnecessary and hinder our ability to operate our family-owned cattle operations in a safe and efficient manner.

Frankly, the two year study on truck weights delays action on important issue to cattlemen everywhere, and continues to put family-owned operations across America at a disadvantage. As cattlemen, we cannot afford for Congress to take the easy way out by agreeing to conduct another study, while many studies already show the safety and efficiency of increasing truck weights with an additional axle.

The provision to prohibit the use of double deck trailers to haul horses is especially egregious to all farmers and ranchers. This prohibition sets a dangerous precedent for all livestock, especially cattle, who are commonly transported on double deck trailers. Safe transport of livestock is a top priority for cattlemen and our producers are trained to load, haul, and unload our animals in the safest and least stressful way possible. This provision does not increase safety, it hurts farmers and ranchers. This provision advances the agenda of animal rights activists without consideration of the impact it will have on agriculture.

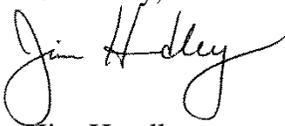
We ask that as responsible business people in Congress to please do everything possible to keep this provision from being enacted in the Highway Bill.

In the coming weeks and months you have the opportunity to help rural America and our farmers and ranchers by addressing real fact based practical, safe improvements to the Transportation bill.

The changes we seek are vital to the business success of our family owned farms and ranches. If We are going to continue to provide our population and feed the world we must take advantage of every single improved efficiency that we possibly can while taking care of the environment and our livestock.

Thank you for supporting our requested changes and helping keep our industry viable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Handley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Handley

Executive Vice President

Florida Cattlemen's Association