

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

July 26, 2011

Administrator Anne S. Ferro
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Suite W60-300,
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Ferro:

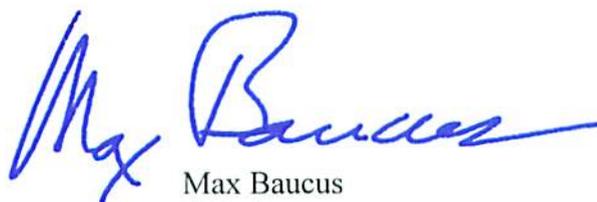
I am writing in support of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) rule that allows states to exempt farmers and ranchers from commercial driver's license (CDL) regulations for transporting their own agriculture vehicles over short distances. This flexibility for states is important. A Montanan driving a tractor on a road near his farm or ranch is a much different scenario than a commercial trucker driving across the country.

FMCSA's notice in the Federal Register seeking public feedback on how existing commercial truck safety regulations impact the agricultural community caused some to believe that you are poised to eliminate states' ability to grant exemptions to CDL requirements for farmers and ranchers. You have since clarified that the purpose of the notice is not to propose new regulations for the farming community. Representatives of your agency have also conveyed to my staff that FMCSA is positively not at a rulemaking stage regarding this issue.

I am confident that the public feedback you have received so far has reemphasized the wisdom of the exemption for farmers and ranchers. The existing rule is restrictive enough to prevent abuse. Montanans have used our roads to transport agriculture vehicles from one field to another or to market for generations. Montanans know to drive with extra caution to accommodate a big piece of equipment on a rural road and proficiently handle situations that might cause a hazard or confusion in more urban parts of the country. It just makes sense to allow states to grant exemptions to CDL requirements in appropriate circumstances. I will strenuously oppose any effort to remove the rule.

I am grateful that you have extended the public feedback period to August 1st. This issue is very important to my constituents, and I am sure that you have already heard from many of them. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,



Max Baucus
U.S. Senator