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4/8/03

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TESTIMONY ON SB 481**

Good Afternoon Mr. Chairman, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. For the record, my name is Michael Lawson and I am the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) Traffic Information Division Chief.

SB 481 is intended to prohibit vehicles from operating over any highway with two tires per axle on axles manufactured and intended for use with four tires per axle. Specifically, the proposed bill is intended to require each axle, except for steering axles and axles that weigh less than 10,000 pounds, to have at least four tires if the tire width of any tire on an axle is less than 14 inches. In addition, the maximum weight per tire may not exceed 600 pounds per inch for steering axles and 500 pounds per inch for all other axles. The purpose of the bill is to reduce premature pavement damage, fatigue, and rutting caused by heavy vehicles operating with two tires per axle rather than the traditional industry standard of four tires per axle. In addition to the pavement issues there are highway safety issues. Excessive loads on the two-tired axles cause tire failure and an increase in braking distance. Also, even moderate pavement rutting poses an extreme risk to all vehicular traffic.

NDOT first became aware of the problems associated with commercial vehicles removing two of the four tires from axles when SR 305 south of Battle Mountain suffered extreme rutting in a 6-month period in the late 1980's. A twelve million dollar emergency contract was necessary to repair the damage, and route restrictions were imposed on longer combination vehicle permits. Most recently we changed the non-reducible over-dimensional permit regulations, in Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), to ensure the language in SB 481 already applies to the heaviest of commercial vehicles. SB 481 merely extends the law to the majority of commercial vehicles that are not regulated by NAC.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I will gladly answer any questions at this time.