



State of Wisconsin
Governor Scott Walker

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

August 16, 2017

Dave Ross, Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Hill Farms State Transportation Building
4802 Sheboygan Avenue
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Secretary Ross:

Pursuant to the provisions set forth in Wis. Stats. § 348.27(11m), you may authorize the issuance of permits to allow vehicles that are transporting baled forage in amounts exceeding the standard height and width limitations if the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) determines that an agricultural emergency exists. As detailed below, I hereby declare that an agricultural emergency exists and request that you issue "Agricultural Emergency Permits" for thirty (30) days, commencing August 17, 2017.


As you know, large areas of North Dakota, Montana, and South Dakota are suffering from drought. The drought is severely stressing the crops, livestock, and grazing land of this high plains region. For example, 81.74 percent of North Dakota is in drought, with 45.56 percent of the state experiencing extreme to exceptional drought, and 75 percent of the state's pasture and rangeland is rated poor to very poor. The governors of North and South Dakota have declared disasters in their states. In Montana, which is experiencing similar conditions, the governor has declared a statewide fire emergency. Unfortunately, the National Drought Mitigation Center's August Outlook report shows the drought continuing.

The drought is likely to have a nationwide economic impact. USDA Secretary Perdue already designated multiple counties within the affected area as drought disaster counties, and many states are planning to ship forage to the region. The State of Wisconsin's assistance in minimizing the impact of the drought may, in turn, minimize the potential devastating economic impacts on the State of Wisconsin.

I believe current conditions justify your immediate issuance of Agricultural Transportation Emergency permits in Wisconsin for baled hay, straw, cornstalks, and stover used for feed. Height and width limits imposed by Chapter 348 of the Wisconsin Statutes may prevent or hinder relief efforts, whereas increasing size limits to the parameters set forth per your discretion should have no effect on highway safety.

I respectfully request that you authorize the issuance of these permits effective immediately. Your prompt attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Jeff Lyon
Interim Secretary

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