

Submitter: Tyler Van Wormer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB839

Members of the Committee,

My name is Tyler Van Wormer, and I serve as a deputy with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office. I am one of the agencies commercial motor vehicle inspectors. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to portions of Senate Bill 839.

As a law enforcement officer tasked with ensuring public safety on our roadways, I am concerned that SB 839 would significantly weaken our ability to hold accountable those who engage in the most egregious violations of commercial vehicle laws. By reducing certain commercial trucking offenses from crimes to mere violations, this legislation risks undermining the enforcement tools necessary to deter and address reckless and unsafe commercial vehicle operations.

Commercial trucking regulations exist to protect both the motoring public and the integrity of our transportation infrastructure. When a commercial vehicle operator willfully disregards lawful instructions or refuses to submit to inspection or weighing, bypassing required inspections, or operating with dangerously unsafe equipment the consequences can be catastrophic. These violations are not minor infractions; they pose an immediate and serious threat to public safety.

Currently, treating these extreme violations as criminal offenses allows law enforcement to intervene effectively, ensuring that bad actors face meaningful consequences. Downgrading these offenses to violations would strip law enforcement of the ability to make arrests in the most serious cases, allowing offenders to avoid accountability with a simple citation. Such cases include a driver refusing to submit to commercial vehicle inspection, refusing to legalize an overweight load an driving away, or making intentional choices to avoid weigh stations and enforcement. This change would embolden negligent operators who already cut corners, making our highways and roads more dangerous for all Oregonians.

Furthermore, the proposed reduction in penalties could hinder cooperation between law enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies, making it more difficult to track repeat offenders and prevent habitual violations. Without the leverage of criminal enforcement, our ability to remove unsafe commercial vehicles from the road will be severely diminished.

I urge the committee to carefully consider the real-world impact of this legislation, specifically the portion of the bill which reduces penalties from a Class B Misdemeanor to a Class A Violation.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the committee reject Senate Bill 839 in its current form. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Van Wormer