

House Committee Approves WDEA Truck Permit Bill

By a unanimous 12-0 vote, the North Dakota Legislature's House Transportation Committee today gave a Do Pass recommendation to House Bill 1320 as amended.

The bill is a positive step to provide uniformity and efficiency in the movement of oversize vehicles in the Bakken region, and potentially, throughout the state of North Dakota.

[HB 1320](#) was drafted in response to concerns aired during the 2015 Legislature that the uniform permit system wasn't truly uniform. Some counties and townships were imposing additional fees outside the system, and basically going their own with permitting of heavy trucks on county and township roads. As a result, the 2015 Legislature initiated an interim study of uniform truck permitting, including the county system as well as the Highway Patrol's e-permit system for state highways.

The truck permit legislation addresses the concerns of the interim legislative committee. It is the byproduct of a working group that included the Western Dakota Energy Association, the ND Petroleum Council, the ND Association of Counties, the ND Motor Carriers Association, the ND Association of Township Officers, several energy industry participants, and a few key legislators.

HB 1320 accomplishes several objectives mapped out by the interim committee's work:

- 1) It establishes a truly uniform system by ensuring the participation of all political subdivisions in a county.
- 2) The bill instructs the ND DOT and Highway Patrol to choose the most efficient routing, considering the impacts on city, county, township, and state roads.
- 3) It provides for notification and public input when fee changes are proposed.
- 4) It allows negotiation of a separate road use agreement when a permit is denied.
- 5) The bill provides counties, townships and the uniform permit system an enforcement tool to discourage damage to roads when restrictions are in place, including imposition of penalties when warranted.

The interim legislative committee also expressed interest in a county permit system that would ultimately be available not only to the oil-producing region, but to all 53 counties in North Dakota. WDEA is working in that direction. The Executive Committee adopted [new bylaws](#) in December that provide a governing structure that will ensure opportunity for input from non-oil producing counties that may choose to participate. WDEA is also working with a software developer on a mapping and navigation system. The goal is a program that will automatically select the most efficient route for permit applicants, factoring in the size of the truck and its cargo, and the carrying capacity and any restrictions on roads and bridges between the starting point and the destination.