



ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL TOWERS | OHIO

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Proponent Testimony
Heavy Duty Towing and Recovery Exemption Amendment
HB 62 – Transportation Budget
Ohio House Finance Committee

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee. My name is Joe Hollabaugh and I am the Executive Director of the Association of Professional Towers-Ohio, a trade association representing Ohio towing and recovery companies.

Last General Assembly, our association worked with then Representative, now Senator, Rob McColley as the Chair of the House Finance Transportation Sub Committee on a simple amendment to HB 26 (the Transportation Budget) that addressed the state's weight and size limit exemption for heavy duty towing and recovery equipment in Ohio. A long standing exemption from size and weight limitations currently exists in ORC 5577.15 for these vehicles working at the site of an emergency. This exemption recognizes that Ohio has and continues to exempt many vehicles from size and weight limitations. ODOT routinely issues special hauling permits for vehicles/loads that exceed statutory maximum legal weights and dimensions. When these vehicles/loads break down or are involved in an accident, in simple terms, it takes weight to move weight.

Heavy duty towing and recovery vehicles enable state, county and local law enforcement, fire and rescue services, and public safety officials the ability to clear the roadways safely and efficiently. These rescue and recovery vehicles are crucial for emergency response, incident and traffic management, and play a vital role protecting the motoring public and the responders working at the scene of an accident.

The problem with the exemption in current statute is that the language does not specifically include these vehicles getting to and returning from the site of the emergency – where they are currently exempt. A simple amendment extended the exemption for heavy duty towing and recovery vehicles traveling to and returning from the site of an emergency in a temporary section of law – creating a pilot project for the language – that expires next month. This amendment, the exact same language that passed as part of the last transportation budget, will make the exemption language permanent before the provision sunsets.

After nearly two years with the extended exemption language in effect, we are happy to report a very successful "pilot project". It has worked well and has caused no problems. We have worked with interested parties that had initial concerns during this time, and we are aware of no opposition to making this language permanent. We ask for your support for this amendment so that heavy duty towing and recovery vehicles can continue to respond to local

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law enforcement, fire chiefs and public safety officials when emergencies arise and these vital towing and recovery vehicles are needed.

After this language was put in place, it was used immediately and exactly as intended for an emergency to rescue the son of Captain Jim Sudduth of the Antrim, OH Volunteer Fire Department. The video you are about to see tells the story of a heavy duty towing and recovery vehicle that needed this exemption to get to the scene of an emergency when there simply was no time for delay. The video aired a few months ago on the History Channel from an episode of the series Rescue Trucks that was filmed here in Ohio, featuring APTO Member Ron Myers of Pine Tree Towing and Recovery and the real-life emergency. The video illustrates the capabilities of these vehicles, the need for the exemption, how they are used, and why heavy duty towing and recovery vehicles are used in an emergency.

Thank you for your time today. I am joined today by Ron Myers from Pine Tree Towing and Recovery and we would be happy to answer any questions.