

March 30, 1982

LB 408

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Wiitala.

SENATOR WIITALA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, colleagues, I rise in support of Senator Cullan's amendment to LB 408 for a whole host of reasons that I just wish to get in on the record. My basic problem with a triple trailer truck is the difficulties that passengers, especially passengers that are flying along the interstate in their vehicles are going to be confronted when we allow three, in essence, three vehicles joined together in transport. I am thinking really of all the conditions that can exist along the interstate dealing with rain, sleet, snow, wind problems, the difficulties that motorists are going to have in passing those large extended semi vehicles. This is especially true, not only in the weather conditions I have mentioned but also when one lane, say, of the interstate is closed or partially closed along the interstate. How on earth is a motorist ever going to understand what lays before him when he is traveling the second lane attempting to pass such a large vehicle as a triple trailer? I would also like to remind this body the tremendous amount of force and weight that is behind the tractor that is carrying a triple trailer, and then if they encounter icy conditions, sleet, wind conditions, what can happen on the interstate. Presently when a semi runs into difficulty, it usually jackknives and goes off into the side of the interstate or into the median. But when you have got three trailers behind the truck and they jackknife with that type of weight, it would be scattered all across the interstate. I think we need to think about those details. Last year there was an attempt to introduce before this Legislature a bill that would address the problems of emergency conditions on our interstates and having the State Patrol declare an emergency condition where semis would be stopped from their forward progress along their routes if it was dangerous to those drivers and to the public at large. I think that by adopting this idea of another trailer in addition to the two that we already allow, we are asking for some more of the same difficulties. I think that what is really happening here is that with the demise of the railroads in our nation we are in effect making railroads out of our interstates. We have got triple trailers here today. We are going to have quadruple trailers somewhere along the line. And I will tell you, maybe somewhat in seriousness and maybe somewhat being facetious, I could accept that if they would put a caboose behind that triple trailer but I guess that is not the issue. So I would hope that this body would recognize the dangers not only to those truck drivers but also to the public at large, not only on ordinary conditions on those roads, but when they are beyond ordinary, and ask ourselves quite seriously, have we put into place the safety mechanisms that will address these emergency situations