

trucks; their impact is a substantial extent. The two items that were identified by the Road Department of having the greatest impact on road damage were heavy trucks and illegal overweight trucks. Those are the conclusions by the Roads Department. It is the same conclusion that was reached by the Comptroller General in the GAO study, and I know maybe facts don't mean a whole lot to some of you who are already committed on this issue but please for a minute listen to some of the conclusions that they reached and I am going to read directly from this report, the summary. "The nation's highways are deteriorating at an accelerated rate and sufficient funds are not available to meet current needs or future requirements. Excessive truck weight is a major cause of highway damage. The rate of highway deterioration will slow down if excessively heavy trucks are kept off of the highways. Federal weight limits and monitoring of state weight enforcement programs are inadequate to protect the \$96 billion federal highway investment made since 1956. The Congress should amend highway legislation to apply federal weight limits to all federal aid highways and to prohibit issuance of overweight permits and exemptions when loads can be reduced to meet normal state weight limits." It goes on to talk about the fact that national statistics show that about 22% of the loaded tractor trailers exceed state weight limits. "The Department of Transportation must work with the states to develop effective weight enforcement program to apprehend overweight trucks. Severe penalties that will deter overweight operations should be imposed. The conclusion is this quite simply overweight trucks are a major cause of road damage." It has got to the point where we cannot afford to meet the costs of keeping up our road system. We have to look to ways to save money on our roads. One of the things that we can look to as being a primary savings is to keep overweight trucks off of our roads and what you have been told is that the 80,000 pound limit has been applied, you are going to spread it out over more wheels so you are going to have less impact. But I am telling to you today that LB 408 is a camel's nose under the tent and once you get that interjected into the operation you have other options and this talks about them in terms of allowing special exemptions and permits to go above the weight limits. It talks about the fact that perhaps after a number of states have this sort of permit system, they could go to the federal government and say it doesn't make any sense to have triple trailers that can handle a hundred or more thousand pounds a load and have only 80,000 allowed for under our present weight limits on the federal level and I can see an effect that can go step-by-step leading to more weight on our roads and more road damage at a time when we should be looking just the opposite way trying to deal with the fact that we