



**For Immediate Release:
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AG GROUPS PRAISE LEGISLATION CLARIFYING AGRICULTURAL HOURS OF SERVICE EXEMPTION

Washington, D.C. – The Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA), the Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference (AFTC) of American Trucking Associations, the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC) and The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) voiced their support today for legislation that would clarify transportation regulations that are critical to the agricultural sector's ability to expeditiously distribute farm supplies. Congressmen Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.), along with 38 additional congressional co-sponsors, introduced the legislation intended to resolve questions regarding the applicability of the agricultural hours of service exemption.

The exemption came into question in 2009 when the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued an interpretation of the regulations that resulted in transportation restrictions for certain farm supplies. The legislation introduced this week by Reps. Graves and Luetkemeyer amends aspects of the *Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act*, which served as the basis for FMCSA's 2009 interpretation, to clarify the applicability of exemptions for agricultural products.

“When I visit with agricultural retailers across the country, one of the top issues they bring up as a threat to their business is the Hours of Service issue,” said ARA President & CEO Daren Coppock. “We appreciate the efforts of Congressmen Graves and Luetkemeyer on this issue so that agricultural retailers are able to serve the needs of farmers during the busy planting and harvest seasons.”

“The agricultural exemption to the HOS rule is a crucial tool for transporters of agricultural products during the busiest times of the year,” said AFTC Chairman, Rick Yost. “We commend the work of Congressmen Luetkemeyer and Graves, and the other co-sponsors, for their work on this very important legislation.”

Specifically, the legislation clarifies that the agricultural hours of service exemption is applicable to:

- Drivers transporting agricultural commodities within a 100 air-mile radius;
- Drivers transporting farm supplies for agricultural purposes from a wholesale or retail business to a farm or other location where the farm supplies are intended to be used within a 100 air-mile radius from the distribution point; or
- Drivers transporting farm supplies from a wholesale location to a retail location so long as the transportation is within a 100 air-mile radius.

“This legislation will ensure that farmer co-ops can continue to provide their producer-owners and other customers with farm supplies in a timely and efficient manner,” said NCFC President & CEO of Chuck Conner. “We appreciate Representatives Luetkemeyer and Graves, and other members of congress, efforts to permanently resolve this issue.”

“TFI commends Congressman Graves and Luetkemeyer, along with the other co-sponsors of this legislation, for taking the steps necessary to ensure that the agricultural community has access to the crop nutrients and farm supplies necessary to produce safe, healthy and abundant crops,” said TFI President Ford B. West.

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Agricultural Retailers Association

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*The **Agricultural Retailers Association** (ARA) is a nonprofit trade association representing the interests of retailers across the United States on legislative and regulatory issues on Capitol Hill. As the political voice of agricultural retailers, ARA not only represents its membership but also educates members on the political process and important issues affecting the industry.*

Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference

American Trucking Associations

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Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference (AFTC), founded in 1995, is the national organization representing motor carrier and allied members of the American Trucking Associations (ATA) on critical issues affecting agricultural and food. For additional information, visit the [AFTC website](#).

National Council of Farmer Cooperatives

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The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives is a national association representing America's farmer cooperatives. There are nearly 3,000 farmer cooperatives across the U.S. whose members include a majority of our nation's more than 2 million farmers, ranchers and growers. These farmer cooperative businesses handle, process, and market agricultural commodities and related products; furnish farm supplies; and provide credit and associated financial services. Earnings from these activities are returned to their members on a patronage basis. Farmer cooperatives also provide jobs for nearly 250,000 Americans, many in rural areas, with a combined payroll of over \$8 billion. Additional information about NCFC can be found at <http://www.ncfc.org>.

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The Fertilizer Institute represents the nation's fertilizer industry. Producers, wholesalers, retailers and trading firms which comprise its membership are served by a full time Washington, D.C., staff in various legislative, educational and technical areas as well as with information and public relations programs. Further information and resources on 4R nutrient stewardship is available at www.nutrientstewardship.com