



State Truck Fees: Are You Treated Fairly?

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A story in the Quarter 1, 2010, edition of Open Road – Official Magazine of the Louisiana Motor Transport Association – highlighted the inequities in truck fees that are assessed commercial carriers versus those that private farm trucks pay. Even if you don't do any business in Louisiana, read on, for a similar situation may exist in your state. Below are a few excerpts from the story and the full story is attached. Thanks goes to the Louisiana Motor Transport Association for sharing this story.

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Basically, the state's system of tagging and taxing big trucks charges commercial carriers as much as 14 times more than it does private farm trucks. Of course, the state and federal government have always supported American agriculture. But, too often, Louisiana farmers are extending their trucking privileges to compete outside of their own farm-to-market lanes with commercial haulers.

One can't fault a farmer for taking advantage of off-season opportunities, but one can ask – as federal highway funds dwindle, and when the state needs every dollar it can get – just how this competitive loophole and (non-farming) subsidy can continue.

So, with the state legislature hard at work on developing a new, long-range plan to fix and fund the transportation system, Louisiana truckers are making the case for a little more fairness.

[Cathy Gautreaux, executive director of the Louisiana Motor Transport Association] accepted the idea that trucks should be assessed based on weight – as long as all trucks in the same weight class pay the same registration fee.

“A truck is a truck,” she said. “The highway knows no difference between commodities.”

A chart points out the specific difference in fees:

For trucks weighing 80,000 pounds - \$504 for a Class 1 Truck versus \$40 for a Class 5 Farm Truck – and for trucks weighing 88,000 pounds - \$563 for a Class 1 Truck versus \$40 for a Class 5 Farm Truck.

“Unfortunately, our pleas for equity have fallen on deaf ears because it is politically easier to raise significant taxes on the people who transport milk, bread, and gasoline than on those who transport farm and forestry products,” said Gautreaux. “That has got to change if they want the support of the trucking industry for a new transportation funding program. After all . . . a truck is a truck.”

Here is a link to the digital publication:

<http://content.yudu.com/Library/A11a3f/OpenRoadQuarter12010/resources/index.htm?referrerUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.yudu.com%2Fitem%2Fdetails%2F120670%2FOpen-Road--Quarter-1--2010>