



# Assemblymember Robert Rivas, 30<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

## AB 584 – Milk Trucking Pilot Program

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### SUMMARY

Assembly Bill 584 will establish a pilot program within the Department of Transportation to allow a dairy truck operator to haul over 80,000 pounds of raw milk if the vehicle uses renewable fuels.

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### BACKGROUND

Existing law imposes limits on the size and weight of vehicles that may be operated on the highway to haul goods up and down California. Nevertheless, the Department of Transportation and local authorities can issue permits to operate vehicles that exceed the specified size, weight, and load limits on highways under certain circumstances.

On December 4, 2015, President Barack Obama signed into law the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (“FAST”) Act. The FAST Act defines a vehicle carrying fluid milk to be a “non-divisible load” meaning a state may issue a permit that allows such a vehicle to exceed federal interstate weight limits. [FAST Act §1409; 23 U.S.C. 127(a)]

California’s neighboring states have used this provision to increase the weight limit for trucks carrying milk, resulting in fewer overall trips and fewer trucks on the road. Idaho, for example, has provided an annual permit for the transportation of milk up to 105,500 pounds on specific routes highlighted in legislation. The added weight per truck reduces the number of trucks on the road, thereby reducing emissions and minimizing road dilapidation.

In California, there are roughly 2,200 truckloads of milk transported from farm to plant daily. In 2020, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order allowing for trucks transporting essential commodities, including milk, an increase in weight to 88,000 pounds. During that time, one cooperative saw its total number of loads transported decrease by 12 percent.

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### PROBLEM

California must identify new and innovative ways to incentivize the largest and heaviest polluters, including our heavy trucking fleets, to transition to renewable fuels and electric vehicles. Meanwhile, the Legislature must also look at ways to reduce the number of trips on California’s impacted and dilapidated highways.

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### SOLUTION

AB 584 will create a pilot program for trucks that haul raw milk to apply for a permit that will allow them to transport loads greater than 80,000 pounds (although no more than 88,000 pounds, maximum) without compromising safety or jeopardizing California’s roads.

Extending the weight limit for trucks hauling milk removes one in every eleven trucks from the road for this heavily trafficked commodity. Allowing this additional capacity per load significantly reduces the number of ranch-to-plant trips, minimizing the impact on our heavily traveled roads and highways. The incentive established for this pilot program will also protect the environment by increasing the use of renewable fuels for the heaviest transportation fleets, therein reducing the emissions.

In order to be eligible for the permit, the hauler must meet the following criteria: the load may not exceed 88,000 lbs., the truck can only carry raw milk, and the hauler must commit to transitioning its trucks that haul milk to 100 percent renewable fuels within 6 months of obtaining the permit. A permit-holder will not be authorized to operate outside of designated corridors identified by the Department of Transportation, ensuring that unsafe roads are not traveled on. The Department of Transportation may charge a recipient of a permit a fee in an amount that does not exceed the reasonable cost of processing the permit to help cover costs for the program.

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### SUPPORT

California Dairies Inc. (Sponsor)

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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