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February 10, 2026

Honorable Aaron Michlewitz, Chair  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 243  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Chair Michlewitz,

I am writing on behalf of the Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association (SC&RA) in strong support of House Bill 4428, An Act Relative to Modernizing Permitting for the Transportation of Certain Loads. This legislation, which will bring uniformity for Massachusetts with neighboring states in the permitting of superloads, will lead to an increase in public safety and a decrease in emissions from reduced truck trips while decreasing costs for businesses and both public and private project owners.

SC&RA is an international trade association involved in crane and rigging operations, specialized transportation, machinery moving and erecting, industrial maintenance, millwrighting, concrete pumping, manufacturing, and rental. These industries execute some of the most complex, multi-modal moves imaginable to deliver cargo safely and on-time. They also manufacture, deliver, and operate the crane and rigging equipment essential to constructing and repairing Massachusetts’ critical public infrastructure facilities, including hospitals, highways, residences, and utilities.

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As you may know, the use of the Commonwealth’s roads and bridges is governed by the dimensions or weight of a mobile crane or a truck and the load it transports. “Superloads” permitted for travel in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts include loads and vehicles whose size and gross weight exceed: 130,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight; 14’11 wide; 14’11 high, with loads 13’8” high or greater requiring a route survey; or 135’ long. A motor vehicle transporting a load that exceeds those dimensions, weight or a combination of the same is required to acquire a superload permit from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). While additional research and analysis for superload permitted trips are performed by MassDOT for sections of a permitted route on interstates and state highways only, the carrier must obtain an engineering analysis for off-ramp, connector, and other “last mile” roadways.

In reviewing Massachusetts’ current superload weight limits, axle allowance and other factors, many Massachusetts’ superload requirements are different from its neighboring states. This is not surprising since Massachusetts law governing superloads was last addressed in the mid-1980s. Potential areas for improving the current permit system without creating adverse impacts include: (i) increasing the weight threshold from 130,000 lbs; (ii) automating the superload process for certain weights; (iii) allowing for additional axle configurations to reduce weight impacts;

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(iv) allowing for the re-use of timely engineering studies; and (v) refining the escort policy to make it more pragmatic in light of workforce issues.

Accordingly, House Bill 4428 modernizes the Commonwealth’s treatment of superloads by updating and streamlining Massachusetts’ permitting process in limited, but meaningful ways. At the outset, the bill does not change anything related to acceptable width, height or length of vehicles. Instead, the legislation focuses on three simple areas. First, House Bill 4428 increases the weight limit threshold for acquiring a superload permit to 199,000 pounds in gross vehicle weight. This change would directly align Massachusetts’ weight limit with the states of Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island. The other New England states have limits and flexibilities built into their systems that make moving from one state to another more seamless as well.

Second, the legislation directs the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to create an application and fee schedule for expedited superload permits. Many other states around Massachusetts have expedited permit systems that ensures businesses are able to acquire the necessary permits quickly. Given the nature of project and development work, transporters and crane operators cannot always know when their services will be needed. While the Commonwealth has made slight regulatory tweaks over the years, its permit process is still more onerous than those in neighboring states.

Finally, this legislation authorizes MassDOT to set appropriate terms and conditions for superload permits, ensuring a balance between safety, efficiency, and economic productivity. For example, this means that the Massachusetts superload permit system will have flexibility built-in to allow for the repeat use of an engineering study or an adjusted escort policy in the event of workforce shortages as experienced during the COVID shutdown. In doing so, the updated statute will allow the MassDOT to keep Massachusetts uniform with neighboring states in the future as conditions and technology change.

In addressing the aforementioned areas, House Bill 4428 can reduce project costs while also improving public safety and reducing emissions from unnecessary commercial motor vehicle trips. By reducing the weight threshold that requires an expensive engineering review, these additional costs will not be added onto project costs nor unnecessarily delay projects. Further, carriers who may meet nearby state’s weight requirements will not have to change the weight configuration at state lines – utilizing multiple vehicles – to meet Massachusetts reduced weight limits. The reduction in vehicle trips will reduce emissions while also ensuring that public safety risks are reduced by less vehicle trips and, as importantly, ones which have not readjusted a previously safe load into a potentially unsafe one. Finally, for those superloads that would still require an engineering study, an allowance to reuse said study for similar routes with similarly configured loads within the previous twelve (12) months would save additional expense and time.

Many industries that require the transporting of equipment, cranes or materials are impacted by this issue. This legislation represents a practical, safety-focused modernization of Massachusetts’ oversize and overweight vehicle permitting process. The modernizing of the permit process is supported by a broad coalition of stakeholders in

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construction, trucking, and specialized transportation because it will enhance public safety, reduce emissions, and promote uniformity with neighboring states — all while reducing unnecessary costs and administrative delays.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, House Bill 4428 is a modest but impactful reform that updates a 40-year-old statute for permitting while accounting for modern vehicle engineering and regional permitting standards. In doing, the legislation enhances safety, reduces emissions, and promotes efficiency without compromising oversight or public protection. By enacting this legislation, Massachusetts will demonstrate that it can balance infrastructure safety with environmental stewardship and economic growth at a time the Commonwealth seeks to build new housing and health care facilities, improve manufacturing facilities and invest in its infrastructure, among the many related areas of interest.

On behalf of the SC&RA's members throughout New England and in Massachusetts, I respectfully request your Committee advance this legislation for its full consideration by the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Chris Smith  
Vice President, Transportation

<sup>1</sup> To date, the Construction Industries of Massachusetts (CIM), Transportation Association of Massachusetts (TAM); Associated Subcontractors of Massachusetts (ASM); Statewide Towing Association (STA); National Federation of Independent Business Massachusetts (NFIB); Massachusetts Retail Lumber Dealers Association (MRLDA); and the Utility Contractors Association of New England (UCANE), among others, have asked MassDOT to modernize its permit system.

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