May 26, 2021

Secretary David Kim
California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA)
915 Capitol Mall, Suite 350B
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Kim:

At a recent meeting of the California State Board of Food and Agriculture it was brought to the Board’s attention the recent challenges regarding goods movement within the state, primarily as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. California’s overall freight mobility is strained with severe delays, shortages and capacity issues which is mostly attributed to the unprecedented surge of commercial imports. One issue of importance within California’s agriculture sector where CalSTA may be of assistance, is the consideration of a temporary special permit for overweight harvest trucking.

California’s current allowable maximum gross weight limit is 80,000lbs. A temporary special permit increase for harvest trucking to 88,000lbs. would help to address current challenges related to labor and availability. This increase would help to minimize harvest loss and overall food waste while providing critical support during a short harvest window. California’s food production depends on long term seasonal drivers (6-7 months) and short term drivers that work the harvest period for 90 to 100 days. With current availability challenges, a temporary increase in allowable maximum gross weight would greatly help to accommodate the lack of projected trucking availability in the harvest window (June – August). Consideration of this flexibility addresses a direct need for the upcoming harvest.

Last year CalSTA provided flexibility on overweight permits for essential goods as part of COVID-19 response. Food and Agriculture is also an essential industry which is currently being impacted by freight and supply delays also related to the pandemic. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Don Cameron

cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
Karen Ross, Department of Food and Agriculture
Dee Dee Myers, Office of Business & Economic Development