



PRESS RELEASE

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Bill to Improve Farm Safety Passes Senate Committee Unanimously *Bill to Create Grant Program for ROPS Ready to Advance to a Vote of the Full Senate*

Madison, WI – Tractor rollovers are the leading cause of death on farms, but that could change in the near future if Senate Bill 35 (SB 35) continues to gain traction.

The bill, which has been authored by Senator Patrick Testin (Stevens Point), Representative Bob Kulp (Stratford), Senator Kathy Bernier (Lake Hallie), and Representative Tony Kurtz (Wonewoc), would provide state funding for Wisconsin’s farm tractor Rollover Protection Structure (ROPS) Rebate Program. This program helps farmers retrofit their tractors with a structure that keeps the driver safe in the event of a rollover.

“Unanimous, bi-partisan support demonstrates that farm safety is an issue that everyone can get behind,” said Sen. Testin. “I look forward to this bill continuing through the legislative process.”

“Workplace safety is very important – no matter what form that workplace takes,” added Rep. Kulp. “This bill enhances safety and represents a big step forward for Wisconsin farmers.”

Rep. Kurtz, an organic farmer who survived a tractor rollover recognizes first-hand the importance of SB 35.

“In rural Wisconsin, we know our neighbors, and we don’t want to see them become statistics,” said Kurtz. “I want other farmers to have the same outcome that I had when I had my accident.”

The ROPS program was founded by the National Farm Medicine Center, part of Marshfield Clinic Research Institute, in 2012. Since then, the program has helped fund the installation of more than 250 ROPS on tractors in 30 counties.

“I’m proud to represent the National Farm Medicine Center, and I appreciate the work they do to address the health and wellness needs of our farm families, said Sen. Bernier. “With this bill, they can expand on the good work they’ve already been doing.”

The bill now has the opportunity to advance to a vote of the full Senate. A companion bill, Assembly Bill 31, was introduced in the Assembly and is also working its way through the legislative process.

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