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David S. Kim
Secretary

June 24, 2021

Mr. Don J. Cameron
Board President
California State Board of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Room 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Cameron:

Thank you for your letter dated May 26, 2021, requesting the issuance of temporary special permits for overweight (up to 88,000 pounds) divisible loads consisting of agricultural products in order to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

California Vehicle Code Section 35780(a)(3) grants the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) the authority to issue special permits, if there appears to be good cause under emergency conditions allowing the operation of vehicles otherwise prohibited on highways under Caltrans' jurisdiction. Caltrans has carefully considered the request to grant transportation permits for overweight trucks hauling agricultural products (tomatoes, peaches, pears, grapes, onions, carrots, citrus, almonds, pistachios, walnuts, olives, pomegranates, rice, wheat, corn, safflower, and potatoes) during this year's harvest season on the state highway system, excluding interstates and a number of bridges.

The issuance of divisible extralegal permits requires substantiation of an extraordinary event such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Caltrans fully understands the considerable challenges facing the agricultural industry due to the severe shortage of transport truck drivers as a result of the pandemic. Given these extraordinary circumstances, Caltrans will issue one-time special permits for a period not to exceed sixty days, valid until August 31, 2021, to transport the

above-mentioned agricultural products up to 88,000 pounds subject to conditions noted in the permit. One of the conditions is that a log of the overweight loads must be submitted every thirty days to Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol so that Caltrans can determine the impact of these heavier loads on the state highway system.

In issuing these permits, I am hopeful that this temporary measure will facilitate the efficient movement of agricultural products during this year's harvest season and enable these valuable commodities to reach their final destinations. I would also note that broader workforce issues facing the industry call for comprehensive, long-term solutions that fall under the jurisdiction of our sister agencies. To that end, CalSTA and Caltrans look forward to working with the Board, the California Department of Food and Agriculture and other partners to address conditions impacting the transport of agricultural products and other divisible loads to avoid the need for special permits in the future.

Thank you for reaching out to me on this important matter.

Sincerely,

David S. Kim

DAVID S. KIM
Secretary

cc: Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Dee Dee Myers, Director, Governor's Office of Business & Economic
Development