

WHEREAS, Illinois agriculture produces foodstuffs that feed the world, creates prosperity in Illinois' rural economy, and provides jobs and income to hard-working Illinoisans on more than 72,000 farms stretching over 26.7 million acres; and

WHEREAS, Spring rains delayed planting in areas of the State and recent Fall rains have further delayed harvest; and

WHEREAS, a crop with higher moisture content requires more trips to transport the crop, which reduces efficiency and causes more traffic on Illinois roads; and

WHEREAS, Illinois' corn crop harvest is 11 percentage points behind its 5-year average as of October 29, 2017, according to the most recent USDA-NASS Illinois Crop Progress & Condition Report; and

WHEREAS, Illinois' lagging corn harvest and delayed harvests of other crops are concentrated in multiple reporting districts throughout the State, including the Northwest, Northeast, and East regions which are significantly behind both the state-wide average for the current year and the same-region average for previous years; and

WHEREAS, the State's vehicle weight restrictions necessitate frequent trips for commodity transportation purposes, which could further delay the transportation of corn from the field to the market or storage in already lagging regions; and

WHEREAS, Illinois' surrounding states provide either by law or by proclamation for increased weight limits for vehicles carrying agricultural commodities, which increases efficiency in the crop transportation process; and

WHEREAS, Section 15-301(e-1) of the Illinois Vehicle Code (625 ILCS 5/15-301(e-1)) allows the Governor to declare that an emergency harvest situation exists, which allows vehicles, with a permit from the Department of Transportation, to exceed the maximum axle weight and gross weight limits by 10% on federal and State highways under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation, excluding interstate highways.

THEREFORE, I, Bruce Rauner, Governor of the State of Illinois do hereby proclaim that, for forty-five (45) days after the date of this Proclamation, an emergency harvest situation exists for the transportation of all agricultural commodities from the field to market or to storage on federal and State highways under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation, excluding interstate highways.