

February 5, 2020

The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Chairman  
The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable John Barrasso, Chairman  
The Honorable Thomas Carper, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

The Honorable Roger Wicker, Chairman  
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

As Congress considers solutions for repairing and improving our nation's transportation infrastructure and the reauthorization of the FAST Act, we urge you to oppose any provisions that would increase maximum truck size or weight limits on federal highways. For many years, legislative proposals to increase truck size or weight limits have been rejected in a bipartisan manner by both the House and Senate. Any changes overturning current federal law which would allow for heavier or longer tractor-trailers would have detrimental impacts on our national, county, and local infrastructure, costing billions of dollars in additional bridge and pavement costs to accommodate these vehicles.

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recommended to Congress that no changes be made in federal truck size or weight limits, concluding that heavier and longer trucks would cause billions of dollars in infrastructure damage. The American Society of Civil Engineers' most recent Infrastructure Report Card issued our nation's roads a grade of "D," finding that one of every five miles of highway pavement is in poor condition and that there is a significant, increasing backlog of rehabilitation needs. Permitting heavier or longer trucks to operate on our nation's roads will only accelerate the deterioration of this infrastructure.

Furthermore, in response to a request from the Federal Highway Administration, the Transportation Research Board released a report in November 2018 identifying 27 research projects focused on pavement, bridges, safety, enforcement, and shipper decisions that are needed to more fully evaluate the impacts of heavier or longer trucks on our infrastructure and the safety of other motorists. We believe it is prudent that this implementation plan and the underlying research projects be completed before any action is taken to change truck size or weight limits.

Increases in truck size or weight would also have severe consequences for local roads and bridges because bigger trucks would not be limited to operating on the Interstate Highways. Trucks need to run on state and local roads to pick up and drop off their freight, as well as to access fuel, food, and other necessities. Local roads and bridges would face significant damage from heavier or longer trucks because they are frequently older, not built to the same standards as interstates, and already in poor condition. This would add further pressure on state, county,

and local governments to find funds to repair these essential roadways when there are already insufficient revenues available today to cover current infrastructure maintenance costs.

Finally, we also urge you to oppose legislative language that would permit heavier or longer trucks to operate in individual states, including any pilot programs, or special exemptions for commodities. DOT has questioned this kind of piecemeal approach for our Interstate Highways, finding that it makes enforcement and compliance more difficult, contributes little to productivity, and may have unintended consequences for safety and highway infrastructure.

For the above reasons, we ask that you reject any legislative language that would increase current maximum truck size or weight limits nationally or in individual states.

Sincerely,

American Public Works Association  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of County Engineers  
National Association of Towns and  
Townships  
National League of Cities  
The United States Conference of Mayors  
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers  
Association  
Association of American Railroads  
American Short Line and Regional  
Railroad Association  
GoRail  
National Railroad Construction and  
Maintenance Association  
Railway Engineering-Maintenance Suppliers  
Association  
Railway Supply Institute  
SMART Transportation  
Coalition Against Bigger Trucks

cc: House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation