

# SHORT LINE FREIGHT RAILROADS TO CONGRESS: OPPOSE LONGER AND HEAVIER TRUCKS

## THE SHORT LINE CONNECTION: A CRITICAL PIECE OF THE U.S. FREIGHT RAIL SYSTEM

 **First & Last mile of service**  
for 1 in 5 cars moving throughout the system each year.

**47,500**  
route miles  
are operated  
by short lines

**29%**  
of the freight  
rail network in  
the U.S.

**10,000+**  
customers are  
served by  
short lines

 **100%** SHORT LINES PROVIDE  
100% OF RAIL SERVICE IN  
SOME STATES AND MORE  
 **25%** THAN 25% IN 36 STATES.

Support for short lines will keep goods moving and retain well-paying American jobs.

As Congress considers solutions for repairing and improving our nation's transportation infrastructure, we urge you to oppose any provisions that would increase maximum truck size or weight (TSW) limits on federal highways.

Changes overturning current federal law resulting in a shift from rail to truck is detrimental to the motoring public, hurtful to the environment, and harmful to public tax-supported infrastructure.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

Allowing bigger and heavier trucks on the federal or state roadways will increase road congestion and crash risk. Congress last increased the federal weight limit in 1982. Those pushing for longer and heavier trucks said it would result in fewer trucks on the road, but in fact, the number of trucks registered in the U.S. and the mileage of trucks traveled has increased by 91%.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Rail is the safest and most environmentally friendly way to move freight over land. U.S. freight railroads, on average, move one ton of freight more than 470 miles per gallon of fuel. Moving freight by truck instead of rail **increases greenhouse gas emissions by up to 75%**, on average. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data show freight railroads account for only 0.6% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and only 2.0% of transportation-related sources (trucking, shipping, air, etc.).

### INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACT

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recommended to Congress that no changes be made to TSW limits, concluding that **heavier and longer trucks would cause billions of dollars in infrastructure damage** to roads and bridges that are primarily paid for by taxes.

Oppose any action increasing TSW, which will push freight from rail to road.

- Protect interstate commerce - exert pre-emption of national standard over piecemeal, state-by-state approach.
- Avert additional damage to already over-burdened highway infrastructure.
- Protect the motoring public.

## CALL TO ACTION

At the request of 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. Congress has since directed DOT to publish an implementation plan for conducting this research and included timelines for its completion. *Request that these research projects be completed before any action is taken to change TSW limits.*

Several states have made changes to the national standards for TSW, allowing pilot programs, or exempting certain industries. 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. *Oppose legislative language that would permit heavier or longer trucks to operate in individual states and urge Congress to protect interstate commerce by asserting pre-emption.*