



May 8, 2023

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

We are members of the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT), a national non-profit highway safety organization that represents over 3,000 law enforcement leaders and local government officials who share our concerns about the dangers to motorists and infrastructure damage that would be caused by increases in semi-truck size and weight.

As your committee explores supply chain issues in the coming weeks, we urge you to reject any proposals to increase the size or weight of trucks. This committee is all too familiar with these bigger truck proposals and has wisely rejected them over the years.

Proponents of heavier trucks have claimed that size and weight increases would be a solution to perceived driver shortages. A survey of professional truck drivers conducted in March 2022 made it clear that bigger trucks would only make matters worse. Conducted in conjunction with the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA), the survey found that 68% of respondents felt that increasing truck size or weight limits would make it *more difficult* to recruit or retain truck drivers. Making the profession even more dangerous would not only fail to address existing concerns of driver recruitment, it would exacerbate the problem.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) conducted a comprehensive, multi-year evaluation of the impacts bigger trucks would have on our national transportation system. Its final report issued in 2016 recommended against any increases in the size or weight of trucks (Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study). The report found that heavier trucks had serious safety problems. Key findings include:

- Heavier trucks had a 47 percent to 400 percent higher crash rate than 80,000-pound trucks based on limited state testing.
- Heavier trucks were found to have a higher out-of-service violation rate and an 18 percent higher brake violation rate when compared to 80,000-pound trucks.

Law enforcement experience supports these findings. Heavier trucks are more likely to roll over and be involved in more severe crashes leading to more injuries and more deaths. So-called pilot programs for heavier trucks amount to little more than experimenting with more dangerous vehicles on the road with other motorists, in effect turning motorists into guinea pigs.

There are also significant infrastructure concerns with bigger trucks. The 2016 USDOT study examined the effect on a limited number of bridges on the Interstate and National Highway System and found significant repair costs to replace thousands of bridges.

Working with CABT, members of our coalition recently completed an analysis of the impacts of heavier trucks on the more than 470,000 local bridges (*The Impacts of Heavier Trucks on Local Roads, March 2023*). Locally owned infrastructure sees significant truck travel and is often built to far lower standards than the interstate system. Consider these facts:

- More than 72,000 local bridges cannot safely accommodate 91,000-pound trucks.
- The cost of replacing these local bridges would be \$60.8 billion.
- This cost would largely be borne by small local governments, many of which operate on very tight budgets.

Due to our very serious concerns about the dangers to motorists and our infrastructure, we ask that you reject any proposals that would increase the size or weight of semi-trucks.

Rick Bailey

Past President, County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas
County Commissioner, Johnson County TX

Christopher Burgos

President Emeritus, New Jersey State Troopers Fraternal Association
State Trooper, New Jersey State Police (Ret.)

Steven Casstevens

Past President, International Association of Chiefs of Police
Chief of Police, Buffalo Grove Police Department IL (Ret.)

Josh Harvill, P.E.

Southeast Region Vice President, National Association of County Engineers
County Engineer, Chambers County AL

Brian Keierleber, P.E.

Past President, National Association of County Engineers
County Engineer, Buchanan County IA

Thomas Klasner, P.E.

Past President, Illinois Association of County Engineers
County Engineer, Jersey County IL

Andy Matthews, Esq.

Executive Director, National Troopers Coalition
Sergeant, Connecticut State Police (Ret.)

Donald Smith

Past President, New York State Sheriffs Association
Sheriff, Putnam County NY (Ret.)

CC: Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee