



August 17, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, U.S. House Committee on
Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on
Appropriations

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chair, U.S. House Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
Chair, U.S. House Committee on
Agriculture

The Honorable David Scott
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on
Agriculture

Dear Committee Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National League of Cities (NLC) and The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), we write to you in strong opposition to any increases to heavy truck size and weight. As the frontline stewards of the nation's infrastructure and public safety, local governments will be directly impacted by the adverse impacts that will result from an increase. **While we strongly believe in developing a bipartisan remedy to the current national supply chain challenges, America's local governments urge you not to do so by increasing heavy truck size or weight.**

Specifically, we are concerned about proposals before Congress that would create a ten-year, 91,000-pound heavy truck pilot program; increase the allowable weight for automobile haulers to accommodate heavier, electric-powered vehicles by ten percent; and increase the axle weight allowance for dry bulk by ten percent. These provisions are not only dangerous in their current form, but they also create slippery slopes for future heavy truck weight increases that jeopardize local communities.

State and local governments already face billions in maintenance infrastructure backlogs and the proposals in question represent further unfunded mandates, including through the establishment of an unusually long "pilot program" allowing an 11,000-pound increase in truck weight that will impose significant new costs. At present, a single tractor trailer fully loaded to industry limits *already* inflicts the same wear and tear as 9,600 passenger cars on our local roads and bridges.

Further, local leaders certainly understand the need to support America's critical farming industry and that it is challenging for agricultural haulers to load dry bulk uniformly where the weight on all truck axles is the same. However, while an axle increase that does not increase gross vehicle weight may seem reasonable, the "fourth power rule" still applies, where the greater the weight load on an axle, the greater the damage caused to a highway, road or bridge occurs at an even faster rate.

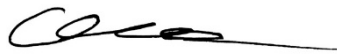
As you may know, local governments collectively own and operate a majority share of the nation's roads – nearly four in five of all highway miles – as well as most of the bridges across the country. Most jurisdictions are simply unable to take on the new costs that would result from proposals

increasing truck weight or size. These locally owned roads account for more than half of where all heavy truck vehicle miles are traveled annually, and many are already under duress. In rural areas, roughly 56,000 bridges *already* have posted weight restrictions.

Still, in these challenging local fiscal environments, it is possible to create bypasses around poorly performing roads and bridges, but we cannot replace our residents. In 2020, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported there were nearly 440,000 heavy truck incidents where almost 5,000 Americans were killed. Heavy truck weight or length increases at the federal level threaten more injuries and deaths.

America's cities and counties support returning our national supply chain to an efficient network that supports our daily lives and wellbeing and stand ready to work with you to make necessary improvements. However, adopting a heavy truck weight increase without providing new, direct funding for local infrastructure jeopardizes the safety of our communities. **We strongly urge you to consider the impacts of heavy trucks on the welfare of roadway users and on local roads and bridges already in need of repair and oppose any increases in truck size and weight.**

Sincerely,



Clarence E. Anthony
CEO & Executive Director
National League of Cities



Matthew D. Chase
CEO & Executive Director
National Association of Counties



Tom Cochran
CEO & Executive Director
The U.S. Conference of Mayors