

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 23, 2010

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Vice Chairman Cochran:

As you work to develop language for the anticipated Continuing Resolution, we respectfully request that you not include a recent proposal to make permanent two pilot programs that exempt trucks traveling in the States of Maine and Vermont from the Federal vehicle weight limitations for the Interstate Highway System (IHS).

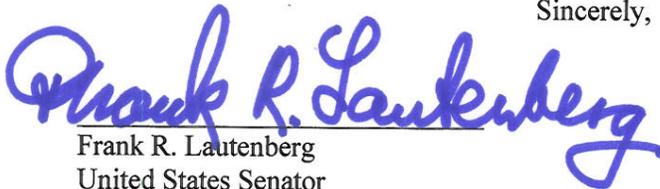
The Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act contained two one-year pilot programs exempting the States of Maine and Vermont from the gross vehicle weight limitation of 80,000 pounds for the IHS, as set forth under title 23, United States Code. These pilot programs permit the operation on the IHS of trucks weighing up to 99,000 pounds for the State of Vermont and up to 100,000 pounds for the State of Maine until December 16, 2010.

Recently, the Administration proposed language to make these pilot programs permanent. We strongly oppose this proposal. Making changes to the current weight restrictions raises important policy concerns that are best resolved as part of the larger federal surface transportation reauthorization. For example, there are significant safety issues with allowing heavier trucks on the IHS due to their longer stopping distances and risk of rollover. Additionally, allowing heavier trucks will deteriorate pavements and bridges faster, causing significantly greater wear and damage to the IHS, and therefore leading to higher maintenance costs.

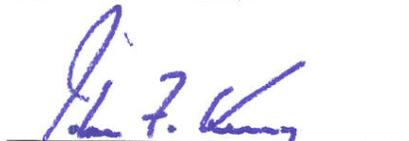
Therefore, we urge you to refrain from including language in the FY 2010 Continuing Resolution that would make permanent the pilot programs for the States of Maine and Vermont or allow any other exemptions to the vehicle weight and size limitations for the IHS.

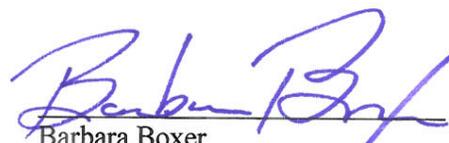
Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

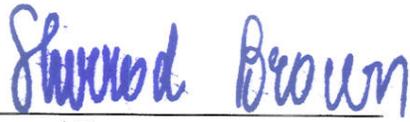
Sincerely,


Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senator


Christopher P. Bond
United States Senator


John F. Kerry
United States Senator


Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill
Claire McCaskill
United States Senator

Cc: Majority Leader Harry Reid