



STATEMENT OF JOAN CLAYBROOK
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Good morning, I am Joan Claybrook, the Chair of Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH), and former Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

I'd like to talk about the ongoing problems plaguing the Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study and why the American public should care.

In 2012, Congress passed a law called MAP-21 which required the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct a study to gather objective data on the impact of longer, heavier trucks on safety and the infrastructure. Seems cut and dry to accomplish – but it has been anything but that. From the start, it has been plagued with biased consultants, bad methodology, and unacceptable short-cuts to finish by an unrealistic deadline. You know the old saying – Garbage In – Garbage Out. That is exactly what is happening, and all American motorists will be human crash test dummies in this experiment if we don't stop it now.

To provide one example of how the study has been biased: DOT's process of awarding the contract for the study was not open but rather was limited to only four hand-picked companies all but assuring a pre-determined outcome. Furthermore, several consultants within this miniscule applicant pool have a clear history of producing cookie-cutter reports for states in support of increasing truck size and weight limits – clearly tainting their objectivity to perform the DOT national study.

When we met with senior officials at the Department of Transportation to relay these serious concerns, we suggested they establish a peer review panel for the study. The panel was created but then we found out that some members appointed to the panel had clear conflicts and ties to corporate trucking interests. We demanded that six panelists be removed, but only two left.

Beyond these deeply troubling biases, we are aware of additional defects with the study. The study will use limited data from just a few rural states that currently allow oversized trucks on wide open roads to issue findings on the safety of large trucks interacting with traffic on crowded and congested highways in urbanized states. Furthermore, the DOT asked for safety data from

the trucking industry – talk about the fox owning the hen house. Voluntary industry-collected data is highly suspect and is biased and prejudicial.

Yesterday the Peer Review Committee of the National Academy of Sciences issued a report on the DOT study which validates our concerns and criticisms. It is a game-changer. The report basically verifies that the DOT study will not produce reliable, credible results on which to base future policy decisions. It stated the methods being used have significant weaknesses that make predictions about safety consequences uncertain. When it comes to truck crashes and lives being at stake, “uncertain” assertions about safety problems are not good enough. This study needs to be stopped and not another dollar spent or consultant paid until major corrections are made. Clearly, it cannot and should not be used as a guide for Congress or states to make future policy decisions on truck size and weight limits that affect our families and truck drivers.

We have conveyed this message to Secretary Foxx, Acting Deputy Secretary Mendez and other senior leaders at the Department of Transportation. Today we urge the Obama Administration to take immediate action. We need a study that will provide an accurate assessment of the safety and infrastructure consequences of bigger and heavier trucks. If not, this study will become the lottery prize for corporate trucking interests pushing for bigger, heavier and more deadly trucks on our highways.

Thank you.