TRUCK SAFETY COALITION

Parents Against Tired Truckers and Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

Proposals to allow 97,000-pound and heavier, overweight trucks on our nation's roadways will have a detrimental effect on our environment. Bigger and heavier trucks will increase the amount of trucks on our roadways, increase the amounts of fuel consumed, cause more emissions to be released into our air, and worsen the already existing problem of congestion on our roadways. An erroneous counter-argument claims that bigger, heavier trucks will benefit the environment by decreasing the number of trucks on the highways. This claim, however, is simply not true. Moreover, increasing truck size and weight would make rail intermodal, a more environmentally responsible way to move freight, much less efficient.

The Facts on Bigger and Heavier Trucks and Their Effects on the Environment

Bigger and Heavier Trucks Will Result in More Trucks, Not Less

- Increases to truck size and weight will not decrease the number of trips, result in fewer miles traveled, or improve safety by reducing the number of trucks on the highways. The number of trucks and miles traveled on U.S. highways has consistently grown over the past few decades even after several increases in both the sizes and weights of large trucks.[i]
- A 2010 study on freight diversion concluded that increasing truck weights to 97,000 pounds would result in a net increase of nearly 8 million more truck trips on our roads and bridges, a 56 percent increase.[ii]

Bigger and Heavier Trucks Will Consume More Fuel

- Heavy trucks account for 17 percent of U.S. transportation energy use.[iii]
- Heavy trucks are less energy efficient users of diesel fuel compared with other modes of freight shipping.[iv]
- U.S. DOT found that a 5- or 6-axle semi-trailer combination truck weighing 100,000 pounds rather than 80,000 pounds suffered a 10.4 percent reduction in diesel fuel mileage.[v]

Bigger and Heavier Trucks Will Mean More Emissions

- The transportation sector is accountable for 28 percent of U.S. energy consumption and global warming pollution.[vi] This sector is only 20 percent energy efficient.[vii] In 2011, freight trucks produced 21 percent of transportation greenhouse gas emissions.[viii]
- Since 1990, the ***percentage*** growth of greenhouse gas emissions from freight sources has been more than ***four times that of*** emissions from passenger sources, "due largely to the rapid increase in emissions associated with medium- and heavy-duty trucks."[ix]
- Heavy trucks are responsible for one-third of U.S. mobile source NOx emissions and almost a quarter of mobile source PM-10 emissions.[x]
- An average truck emits almost three times more nitrogen oxides and particulates than a freight train per ton-mile.[xi]

Bigger and Heavier Trucks Will Increase Highway Congestion

- According to the Texas Transportation Institute, in 2011, urban Americans spent $121 billion on congestion costs, which include the 5.5 billion extra hours traveled and the 2.9 billion extra gallons of fuel.[xii]
- Trucks were accountable for $27 billion of the $121 billion in urban congestion costs spent in 2011.[xiii]

- Trucks have a greater effect on traffic and congestion than passenger cars. This is true for congested highways on hilly or mountainous terrain in particular, where conventional truck configurations may be equivalent to 15 or more passenger cars.[xiv] Increasing truck size would merely exacerbate this problem.

Bigger and Heavier Trucks Will Mean Less-Efficient Freight Transportation

- There are more environmentally responsible ways to move freight. On one gallon of fuel, a freight train is able to move one ton of freight nearly 476 miles, almost four times as much cargo as a truck is able to haul.[xv]
- In fact, in 2002, rail consumed 11.6 times less energy per ton-mile and waterborne commerce consumed 8.5 times less energy per ton-mile than heavy truck transport.[xvi]
- Increasing trailers to 33 feet would result in a less productive use of intermodal rail. Intermodal rail cars are equipped to carry six, 28-foot trailers end to end. If trailers are lengthened, rail cars would only be able to carry 3 trailers per trip. That is a 41 percent reduction in intermodal efficiency.[xvii]
- A recent study showed that approximately 10 percent of miles driven are "deadhead" miles, meaning that the truck is driving with an empty trailer. Larger engines necessary to pull heavier weights will contribute to increased emissions during non-productive hauling periods.[xviii]

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[i] Large Truck and Bus Crash Facts 2010, Table 4 Large Truck Fatal Crash Statistics, 1975-2010, 1975-2010, FMCSA, Aug. 2012, http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/facts-research/research-technology/report/LTCC_Report_LargeTruckandBusCrashFacts2010.pdf.
[ii] Martland, Carl D. Estimating the Competitive Effects of Larger Trucks on Rail Freight Traffic. Rep. Final Report ed. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print. October 26, 2010.
[iii] Transportation Energy Data Book: Edition 32, U.S. Department of Energy, Jul. 2013, available at http://cta.ornl.gov/data/tedb32/Edition32_Full_Doc.pdf.
[iv] Transportation Energy Data Book: Edition 32, U.S. Department of Energy, Jul. 2013, available at http://cta.ornl.gov/data/tedb32/Edition32_Full_Doc.pdf.
[v] Western Uniformity Scenario Analysis, FHWA, Apr. 2004, available at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/truck/wusr/wusr.pdf
[vi] Transportation Energy Data Book: Edition 32, U.S. Department of Energy, Jul. 2013, available at http://cta.ornl.gov/data/tedb32/Edition32_Full_Doc.pdf.
[vii] Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Estimated U.S. Energy Use in 2012, available at https://flowcharts.llnl.gov/content/energy/energy_archive/energy_flow_2012/2012new2012newUSEnergy.png.
[viii] Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2011, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), April 2013.
[ix] Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2011, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), April 2013, p. A-157 (Emphasis added to highlight recommended changes).
[x] U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Natural and Human Environment (April 2005), Assessing the Effects of Freight Movement on Air Quality at the National and Regional Level, Table ES-1.
[xi] GoRail, available at http://gorail.org/rail-benefits/environment/.
[xii] Texas Transportation Institute (December 2012). TTI's 2012 Urban Mobility Report, p.1, available at http://d2dtl5nnlpfr0r.cloudfront.net/tti.tamu.edu/documents/mobility-report-2012.pdf.
[xiii] Texas Transportation Institute (December 2012). TTI's 2012 Urban Mobility Report, p. 14, available at http://d2dtl5nnlpfr0r.cloudfront.net/tti.tamu.edu/documents/mobility-report-2012.pdf.
[xiv] U.S. Department of Transportation (April 2004), Western Uniformity Scenario Analysis, p. VIII-3, available at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/truck/wusr/chap08.htm.
[xv] GoRail, available at http://gorail.org/rail-benefits/environment/.
[xvi] Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT), calculations based on data from DOE; Tables 2.16, 5.1, and 5.12.
[xvii] Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT).
[xviii] Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Profile 2012: Narrative Profile of Owner-Operator Members of OOIDA, Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA), 2013, available at http://www.ooida.com/OOIDA%20Foundation/RecentResearch/OOIDP.asp.