



**The Truck Safety Coalition** is a partnership between **The Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) Foundation**, and **Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T)**. The Truck Safety Coalition is dedicated to reducing the number of deaths and injuries caused by truck-related crashes, providing compassionate support to truck crash survivors and families of truck crash victims, and educating the public, policy-makers and media about truck safety issues.

**Spring 2010**

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**Update on SHIPA.**

*Over 80 Consumer, Health, Safety, Environmental, Labor and Law Enforcement Groups Support the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act (SHIPA).*

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**No compelling case for heavier trucks.**

**Editorial from Minnesota's Star Tribune**

December 27, 2009 - Two pilot projects in New England should help Congress and the states sort out a troublesome perennial question: Should bigger, heavier trucks be allowed on interstate highways? Until the Maine and Vermont experiments are finished in 2011 and the results evaluated, lawmakers should resist pressure from trucking interests eager for heavier loads nationwide.

Here's the situation: Since 1982, trucks have been held to 80,000 pounds on the interstate system while states -- including Minnesota -- have patched together a confusing quilt of increasingly lenient load limits on lesser roads. State limits tend to vary by cargo or by time of year, nearly always as favors to loggers, canners, paper mills or other local industries.

By contrast, weight limits on the federal interstates have held fairly constant, owing to arguments that heavier trucks would pose greater danger to motorists and do more damage to roadways. But recently the trucking lobby has been pushing hard to raise interstate weight limits, claiming that heavier consolidated loads would cut per-unit shipping costs, save fuel, reduce pollution, cut the number of crashes and (with an additional axle) do no greater damage to road surfaces.

In the Vermont pilot project, rigs with a sixth axle will be allowed to increase loads by as much as 50 percent -- to 120,000 pounds. In Maine, the increase will be 25 percent -- to 100,000 pounds. The American Trucking Association and key shippers savor the efficiencies that heavier loads might bring. Hitching a ride on jobs legislation now pending in the Senate, or on any number of other bills, offers the opportunity -- or perhaps the threat -- of allowing all states to increase loads to 97,000 pounds.

But the trucking lobby has not made a compelling case. With cars needing to get smaller and more fuel efficient, the scary mismatch with bigger, heavier trucks would become more frightening. Moreover, the trend nowadays to push workers -- including truck drivers -- beyond reasonable hourly limits only adds to safety concerns. Truck drivers and smaller shippers generally do not favor heavier load limits.

States, meanwhile, continue to cut back on truck weight enforcement as part of their overall budget struggles. At last count, Minnesota had only six full-time weigh stations. A single overloaded truck does 4,000 times more damage to pavement than a car. Yet there's ample evidence that in many states truck taxes and fees fall short of covering the costs of repairing truck damage to roadways.

The deplorable condition of the nation's roads -- particularly the aging interstate system -- is perhaps the biggest reason to resist heavier trucks. The American

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## Hours of Service Case Reaches Settlement.

### Obama Administration Agrees to Reexamine Rule to Rid America's Roads of Tired Truckers.

ARLINGTON, VA (November 10, 2009) – The Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) have agreed to conduct a new round of rulemaking that could result in reducing the current unsafe hours of service rule for truck drivers issued by the Bush administration in 2003.

As a result of the October 26 settlement, the Truck Safety Coalition, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, Public Citizen, and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, petitioned the court to hold in abeyance the lawsuit they filed against the FMCSA and their current hours of service rule. The FMCSA must begin a new rulemaking process and submit a notice of proposed rulemaking to the Office of Management and Budget within nine months and publish a final rule within 21 months.

The Bush administration increased the number of daily and weekly hours truckers can drive from 10 to 11 consecutive hours per 14-hour shift and total weekly driving hours from 60 to 77 per driver every seven days (a more than 25 percent increase). The rule dramatically expanded driving and work hours by cutting the off-duty rest and recovery time at the end of the week from a full weekend of 50 or more hours off duty to as little as only 34 hours.

The groups have petitioned the U.S. Court of Appeals a total of three times, most recently in March 2009. In 2004, the court vacated the hours of service rule on the grounds that the government did not adequately consider the effects of longer driving hours on individual truck driver health and traffic safety, and in 2007 because the agency did not let the public examine and comment on the new crash

risk analysis used by the agency to support reissuing the same exact rule.

Daphne Izer, who co-founded Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.) in 1994 after a fatigued truck driver killed her 17-year-old son Jeff and his three close friends, was pleased with the settlement. "The good news is that there will be a new hours-of-service rule that hopefully will protect truck drivers and families like mine. This new rule must put people before profits."

Dawn King, whose father, William Badger, was killed on December 23, 2004 when a tractor trailer driver fell asleep behind the wheel and collided with his car, is currently a board member of Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) and a participant in the Truck Safety Coalition's First Response program assisting fellow grieving truck crash victims. She added, "Fatigued drivers are a threat to the safety of everyone on the road. This settlement is a positive step forward and should lead to improved worker and safety regulations in the truck driving industry."

## Truck Safety Coalition Statement on Distracted Driving.

### Official Statement by Joan Claybrook, Chair of CRASH, in response to the Department of Transportation commercial vehicle driver texting ban.

January 26, 2010 - I am here today representing the Truck Safety Coalition, a partnership of Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) and Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.) to lend our support to Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood's action to ban cell phone texting by drivers of commercial motor vehicles in interstate commerce. Our organizations representing victims of truck crashes believes that no driver should be distracted while driving, especially when

operating a commercial truck or bus. Operators of giant trucks weighing 80,000 pounds and passenger buses carrying up to 55 people should not have anything on their minds except safe driving, and nothing in their hands except the steering wheel. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation over 5,800 people were killed and 515,000 injured in distracted driving crashes in 2008. We need to put a stop to this epidemic. That is why the Truck Safety Coalition supports Secretary LaHood in announcing federal action to curb texting while operating commercial motor vehicles.

Texting requires a person to focus attention on the text messaging device, distracting attention from the roadway to the airwaves. No one can operate a motor vehicle safely when their eyes, hands or mind are not focused on the driving task and safe vehicle operation. This is all the more true in the case of trucks and buses. There is no place for texting when a split second distraction can result in tractor-trailer jackknife, a motorcoach rollover, or a collision with a family in a passenger car. For that reason, the Truck Safety Coalition calls for a ban on driver distractions and supports Secretary LaHood's action today to start banning texting by commercial vehicle drivers.

Today's agency guidance, in conjunction with distracted driving Summit and President Obama's Executive Order 13513 issued on October 1, 2009, prohibiting texting by government employees while operating motor vehicles, is a good start, but it is just a start in tackling the problem of commercial vehicle safety. On average about 5,000 people are killed and another 100,000 people are injured each year in truck crashes. While some of these are the result of distracted driving and texting, there are many other causes including driver fatigue and excessively large trucks. That is why we also need comprehensive federal regulation and tough Congressional legislation to improve truck safety.

# Over 80 Consumer, Health, Safety, Environmental, Labor and Law Enforcement Groups Support the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act (SHIPA).

## National Organizations

American Automobile Association (AAA)	National Association of Police Organizations
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety	National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders
America Bikes	National Black Police Association
BlueGreen Alliance	Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC)
Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways	National Sheriff's Association
Communication Workers of America (CWA)	National Troopers Coalition
Consumer Federation of America	Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA)
Environment America	Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.)
Friends of the Earth	Public Citizen
Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association	Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
International Brotherhood of Teamsters	Sierra Club
Kids and Cars	Transportation for America
Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA)	Trauma Foundation
National Association of Railroad Passengers	Truck Safety Coalition

## Regional and State Organizations

Action Committee for Transit	Environment Oregon	One Less Car
Active Transportation Alliance	Environment Texas	Penn Future
All Aboard Washington	Environment Virginia	PennEnvironment
American Trauma Society of Maryland	Florida Bicycle Association	Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association
Assoc. of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates	Illinois PIRG	Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters
BikeLane Coalition	Jersey Off Road Biking Association (JORBA)	RAIL Solutions
Brain Injury Association of Maryland	Laborers Union of MN & ND (MN LIUNA)	Sierra Club North Star Chapter
Brain Injury Association of Minnesota	League of Illinois Bicyclists	Sierra Club of Oregon
Brain Injury Association of Oregon	LIUNA Local 405	Sierra Club of Pennsylvania
Brain Injury Association of West Virginia	MADD of Pennsylvania	Sierra Club of Virginia
California Police Chiefs Association	Maryland Conservation Council	Teamsters Joint Council 25
Clean Air Council	Maryland Sierra Club – Prince George's Chapter	Teamsters Joint Council 32
Consumer Federation of California	Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers	Teamsters Joint Council 42
Environment California	Minnesota Emergency Nurses Association	Teamsters Local 206
Environment Illinois	National Resource Defense Council of California	Transit for Livable Communities
Environment Iowa	New Jersey Bicycle Association	Virginia Association of Railway Patrons
Environment Maryland		Virginia Sierra Club – Mount Vernon Chapter
Environment Minnesota		Western States Sheriffs' Association
Environment New Jersey		

The Truck Safety Coalition continues its efforts to add organizations to this list. If you are interested in helping our efforts or have recommendations, please contact us at (703) 294-6404 or [crash@trucksafety.org](mailto:crash@trucksafety.org).



## Why bigger and heavier trucks will be more deadly.

**Bigger, Heavier Trucks Are Less Safe.** Bigger trucks take *longer to stop* and *roll over more frequently*. Deficient brake systems are already a leading factor in truck accidents, allowing bigger trucks would make matters worse. Transportation Research Board Special Report No. 267, released in 2002 by the National Academy of Sciences stated that *increased truck weights in the U.S. could not be recommended because nothing was known about their safety*.

**Allowing Bigger and Heavier Trucks Will Result In More Trucks On The Road.** According to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of the Census and the Federal Highway Administration, increases in truck sizes and weights *always* result in *more bigger, heavier trucks than before, not less*.

**Bigger, Heavier Trucks Inflict More Damage to Roads and Bridges.** Allowing giant trucks *weighing 97,000 pounds or more* on U.S. roads and bridges would *radically increase damage* to highway pavement and bridges. Overweight trucks create a disproportionate level of damage to our roads and bridges, consistently documented in research studies conducted by the states, the federal government, and the National Academy of Sciences.

**Bigger, Heavier Trucks Guzzle More Fuel and Increase Air Pollution.** Allowing bigger trucks would *dramatically increase* heavy truck fuel consumption and *produce much higher emissions* at a time when Congress is seeking to reduce the U.S. reliance on carbon-based fuels and to address global warming. Within transportation, truck freight represents the fastest growing mode of pollution producing more than 220 million tons of carbon dioxide each year. Trucks with heavier gross weights require larger engines that decrease fuel economy on a miles-per-gallon basis according to the Western Uniformity Scenario Analysis.

**The American Public Decisively and Consistently Opposes Increases in Truck Size and Weights.** A recent public opinion poll released in May 2009 by Lake Research Partners found that only 16% of Americans support allowing increased truck weights and 81% feel that double and triple trailer trucks are less safe and more dangerous than trucks pulling a single trailer.

## No compelling case for heavier trucks.

Continued from front page.

Society of Civil Engineers has estimated the nation's infrastructure gap at a staggering \$1.6 trillion. The Minnesota Department of Transportation places Minnesota's transportation investment deficiency at \$50 billion. While spreading heavier loads over six axles may not

worsen the rate of destruction, the rate would nonetheless continue to grow without the massive repairs needed. And, as Minnesotans well know, bridges are more vulnerable to heavy loads than pavement. Twelve percent of the state's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

Trucks play a huge role in Minnesota's economy. By 2020, truck traffic is expected to increase by one-third, and trucks are expected to move more than

\$950 billion of freight per year. Those trends testify to the desperate need for infrastructure repair -- not to the need for heavier trucks. At least until the Vermont and Maine experiments are completed, Congress should resist heavier loads nationwide.

**This editorial ran after Tara Gill, Truck Safety Coalition's Minnesota Organizer, met with the Editorial Board of the Minnesota Star Tribune.**