



Parents Against Tired Truckers and Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

Protect Current Federal Truck Size and Weight Laws: Support SHIPA

The Truck Safety Coalition, along with over 90 consumer, health, safety, environmental, bicycle, labor, and law enforcement groups, strongly support SHIPA, the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act, H.R. 1574. SHIPA will prevent the constant threats to increase truck sizes and weights on the non-Interstate portion of the federal National Highway System (NHS) that endanger the motoring public as well as our roads and bridges by extending the protections afforded to the 44,000-mile Interstate system to the 160,000-mile NHS. This legislation would also close loopholes that allow the operation of overweight trucks and would establish an enforcement program to ensure accountability. Additionally, SHIPA would extend the safety and infrastructure protection that was achieved in 1991 when Congress overwhelmingly enacted the freeze on longer combination vehicles (LCVs) in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). As debate on the successor to SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) begins, we urge Congress to retain the current federal size and weight limits by supporting SHIPA and to reject any special interest exemptions.

Bigger and Heavier Trucks Will ...

... Be More Dangerous to Motorists, Bicyclists and Pedestrians.

- Every year 4,000 people are killed in truck crashes in the U.S. and another 100,000 are injured.
- The chances of a big truck crash resulting in deaths and serious injuries increase with each extra ton over the 80,000 lb. federal limit. (UMTRI 1998; FHWA 1997)
- Heavier trucks take longer to brake and are more prone to rollover in crashes. (ASCE 2005; IIHS 2004; FHWA 1997 & 2000; UMTRI 1983; IIHS 2003; NAS 1990; NHTSA 2004; CVSA 2000)
- Deficient braking systems are already a leading factor in truck crashes; allowing bigger, heavier trucks will make matters worse.

... Inflict More Destruction to the Environment.

- 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 on U.S. highways has consistently grown over the past few decades even after successive, several increases in both the sizes and weights of large trucks. (FMCSA 2004 and 2003; Truck/Vehicle Inventory Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census)
- Heavy trucks are highly energy-inefficient users of diesel fuel. (National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission: Transportation for Tomorrow, December 2007)
- 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. (U.S. DOT Western Uniformity Scenario Analysis 2004)
- There are more environmentally sound ways of moving freight that do not depend on large trucks. "A freight train can move a ton of freight an average of 436 miles on a single gallon of fuel. That's almost four times as far as it could move by truck." (<http://www.freightrailworks.org/>)

... Cause More Damage to Our Fragile Infrastructure.

- Allowing giant trucks weighing 97,000 pounds or more on U.S. roads and bridges would radically increase damage to highway pavement and bridges.
- Increases in truck weight limits will often exceed the design criteria that were used when a bridge was constructed. Adding an extra axle to 97,000 trucks does nothing to limit the increased wear and tear they will cause to bridges.
- Concrete decks and other bridge elements wear out with repetitive loadings by heavy trucks. Almost all bridge damage and reduced service life is due to excessive heavy truck traffic.