



Parents Against Tired Truckers and Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

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## **FMCSA Administrator Ferro Contradicts Claims by Trucking Industry** *Truck Crash Fatalities Up to Nearly 4,000 in 2010 Demonstrating Need for Safer Truck Safety Rules*

Arlington, VA (December 2, 2011): For the first time, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administrator (FMCSA) Anne Ferro revealed that initial 2010 data on fatal truck crashes indicate truck crash fatalities have increased to nearly 4,000 people. In 2009, 3,380 people were killed in truck crashes and 74,000 others were injured. Administrator Ferro released this information during her testimony on the pending truck driver hours of service (HOS) reforms before a House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>.

This critical data supports the position of safety groups, families of truck crash victims, and labor who have been urging the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Obama Administration to issue a safer truck driver HOS rule to reduce driver fatigue. The trucking industry has been pushing for retention of the current rule primarily based on the decline in truck crash fatalities in the last few years. Safety groups have countered that there is no link in the recent decline in deaths and have provided solid evidence to the Obama Administration and Congress that the claim is patently false.

“This newly released data proves that the ‘Trucking Industry Emperor’ has no clothes. We already knew that there were no facts or evidence whatsoever that linked the current HOS rule and the recent improvements in truck crash and fatality data. Now it’s time for the Obama Administration to do the right thing and protect innocent motorists and truck drivers,” stated Joan Claybook, Chair of Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways.

Upon learning of the recent increase in truck crash fatalities, Daphne Izer, Founder of Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.), responded, “I am deeply saddened that more families have suffered the loss of loved ones in truck crashes last year. I urge policy-makers to take heed of this new data and move forward on truck safety improvements including a revised, safer Hours of Service rule. The trucking industry’s greed, evidenced by their manipulation of data, should not come before the safety of everyone on the roads.”

Under the current rule truck drivers can drive 77 hours a week and work up to 84 hours a week. Agency actions to revise the current HOS rule are the result of a legal agreement between the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and safety and labor groups while a lawsuit is held in abeyance. The groups have challenged the current HOS rule three times in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. In 2004, the Court unanimously vacated the Bush Administration HOS rule on the grounds that the government did not adequately consider the effects of longer driving hours on individual truck driver health and safety. In 2007, the court once more unanimously overturned the rule because the agency did not subject its analysis to public comment. After issuing the same rule again, as a “midnight” rule in late 2008, FMCSA was sued for a third time which led to the legal settlement. The revised proposed rule is currently under review by the White House Office of Management and Budget.

John Lannen, Executive Director of the Truck Safety Coalition (TSC) added, “When 65% of truck drivers are saying that they often or sometimes feel drowsy while driving and nearly 50% have admitted to actually fallen asleep behind the wheel of a big rig, that’s a major, industry-wide epidemic.” Lannen continued, “We need a new HOS rule and we urge the trucking industry to face up to the fact that fatigue is pervasive in the industry and that it is unacceptable that thousands are needlessly dying each year in truck crashes. They need to stop trying to block an overdue safety measure by using a falsely predicated argument that the current rule is safe and join us to make the roads safer for all motorists and truck drivers.”

The TSC has joined with Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety and other safety groups in sending a letter today to the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs Administrator Cass Sunstein disputing phony claims by the ATA and urging a new, safer HOS rule. It can be found at [www.trucksafety.org](http://www.trucksafety.org).