

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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January 31, 2012

The Honorable John Mica
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mica:

We are writing to voice our strong opposition to any provisions in the "American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act" that will increase truck size and weights. While the Teamsters Union strongly supports enactment of a new surface transportation bill that addresses the critical needs of our nation's infrastructure, now is not the time to compromise highway safety and do even further damage to our highways and bridges.

Our highways are literally crumbling, and nearly half of our bridges are more than 40 years old. One out of four bridges in our nation is structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. And while a sixth axle, if properly deployed, will help mitigate the impact of additional weight on highway road surfaces, nothing disperses 97,000 pounds of weight on a bridge.

Over 600,000 of our 1.4 million members start their workday by turning a key to a vehicle, whether it's an 18-wheeler, a school bus, a UPS van or some other delivery truck. From a driver perspective, we know that our roads are congested like never before. Driver reaction times are now pushed to the limit. Yet the argument that heavier trucks will make our highways safer is severely flawed. Heavier and longer trucks mean greater stopping distances forcing even shorter reaction times. Our merging lanes aren't designed for heavier trucks to accelerate to safely merge, and most of our off-ramps aren't designed for longer heavier trucks. This is evident by simply looking at the skid and scuff marks on the jersey walls.

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Proponents of heavier trucks say that increasing weights will mean fewer trucks on our highways. That's just not true. In fact, a recent U.S. DOT study found that increased truck size and weights would result in a significant decline in rail revenue and rail traffic. History shows that every time there has been an increase in truck weights, truck traffic has increased because it becomes cheaper to ship by truck than rail.

As the U.S. moves forward to compete in an ever growing global economy, it is imperative that we rebuild and expand our infrastructure to meet the needs of the future. Increasing truck size and weight at this time is not sound transportation policy. We cannot support a bill containing truck size and weight increases, which in turn compromises highway safety and further damages an already frail infrastructure.

Sincerely,



James P. Hoffa
General President

JPH/fm

cc: The Honorable Nick Rahall, Ranking Member, Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee
Members of the Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure