



November 2, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the oldest and largest national trade association representing America's cattle producers, I strongly encourage you to support truck weight reform when the House considers H.R. 22, also known as the Highway Bill. NCBA's membership strongly supports Congressman Ribble's amendment to give states the option to increase truck weights to 91,000 pounds with the addition of a sixth axle (H.R. 3488). NCBA also urges your support for Congressman Rooney's amendment to allow states to issue permits for the transportation of livestock on trailers up to 95,000 pounds (H.R. 3726). The reason for our support for these amendments is simple as the current transportation laws are outdated and need to be modernized. The safe transportation of cattle is a priority for America's cattle producers and consolidating shipments of cattle would result in fewer trucks and a more efficient transportation system.

Congress should only support a Highway Bill that brings our transportation laws into the twenty-first century. NCBA's membership transports cattle in all fifty states and the safety of our cattle and other vehicles with whom we share the road is a priority. As the economy grows there will be a greater need for trucks to move products to market. Congress has an opportunity to take a responsible course of action to increase truck weights by applying the findings of numerous studies. One of the studies is the U.S. Department of Transportation Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study that confirms the positive results of increasing truck weights with the addition of a sixth axle. By embracing the findings of the study the industry can consolidate shipments of cattle resulting in fewer trucks on the road. Additionally, the key findings indicate increasing truck weights, with the addition of a sixth axle, will improve the safety and efficiency of trucks on the road without a significant shift of shipments by rail to truck. I encourage you to carefully consider these findings and the benefits of having more efficient transportation on our roads and bridges.

NCBA's membership also supports the inclusion of the Highway Exceptions for Ranchers' Deliveries Act of 2015, sponsored by Congressman Rooney. This measure allows states to issue special permits for the transportation of livestock on trailers up to 95,000 pounds. Unlike most goods shipped by truck or rail, livestock need special attention and shipments are carefully organized to take into consideration the needs and welfare of the animals being transported. The industry's goal is to move cattle between locations safely and as quickly as possible to minimize stress of the animals. The patchwork of state and national truck weight laws creates inefficiencies and forces livestock transporters to take indirect and longer routes. Current truck weight laws result in more partially empty livestock trailers which results in multiple shipments of cattle and more trucks on the road. Our industry fully supports bringing our transportation system into the twenty-first century.

Congress has the opportunity to create a more efficient transportation system for livestock while maintaining the safety for everyone who shares the Nation's highway system. Previously, Congress funded studies to ensure science was the cornerstone of increasing truck weights. Numerous studies show the positive impact increasing truck weights, with an additional sixth axle, will have on the efficiency and safety of our transportation infrastructure. On behalf of our membership please join the efforts of Congressmen Ribble and Rooney to create a more safe and efficient transportation system.

Sincerely,



Philip Ellis, NCBA President

U.S. DOT STUDY DATA DEMONSTRATES SAFETY & EFFICIENCY OF HEAVIER SIX-AXLE TRUCKS

The technical findings from the U.S. DOT's Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study show positive performance for six-axle trucks travelling at both 91,000 and 97,000 pounds, while also confirming reduced logistics costs, pavement life-cycle costs, fuel costs, vehicle miles traveled, congestion, and emissions associated with these configurations as compared to the five-axle, 80,000 pound control vehicle.

Importantly, state-level Interstate System data shows the six-axle configurations resulted in fewer fatal crashes, and the findings indicate that their use would result in only a nominal level of modal shift from freight rail to trucks.

Safety: No Change in Handling & Performance and Fewer Fatal Crashes

The study found no appreciable maneuvering difference between the five and six-axle configurations, and state-level empirical data shows that crashes involving the six-axle configuration less frequently produced fatalities or injuries (indicating a lower severity of crashes).

- Turning and braking for both the 91,000 and 97,000 pound six-axle vehicles were shown to be comparable to the control vehicle, and below the 250-foot federal stopping distance requirements for large trucks. (Vol. II, "Highway Safety," pp 60-65).
- Heavier six-axle vehicles operating on Interstate Highways in both Washington and Idaho during the period studied were involved in no fatal crashes—less than the five-axle control (Vol. II, "Highway Safety," Tables 12- 13, p 32).
- Crashes involving heavier six-axle trucks less frequently involved injury than crashes involving the 80,000 pound, five-axle control vehicle (Vol. II, "Highway Safety," Tables 12-13, p 32).
- Vehicle configuration was "not a significant predictor" of the likelihood for violations (Vol. II, "Highway Safety," p 90).

Efficiency: Reduced Logistics Costs, Vehicle Miles Traveled & Pavement Costs

Truck weight reform would reduce logistics costs, pavement lifecycle costs and vehicle miles traveled.

- Trucks with six axles weighing 97,000 pounds and 91,000 pounds yield significant logistics savings and reductions in vehicle miles traveled compared to the 5 axle control vehicle at 80,000 pounds, with greater savings from the 97,000 pound configuration (Vol. I, p ES-11).
- Bridge fatigue costs for steel bridges are “small” relative to bridge program costs (Vol. II, “Bridge Structure,” p ES-8).
- The use of six-axle trucks weighing 91,000 and 97,000 pounds would yield significant decreases in predicted pavement Life Cycle Costs (LCC) from the base scenario (Vol. I, p ES-11).
- Only 3.3 percent and 4.6 percent of Interstate bridges require posting for trucks weighing 91,000 pounds and 97,000 pounds, respectively (Vol. II, “Bridge Structure,” p ES-7).
- The study’s modest estimated one time bridge costs for the six-axle configurations (in lieu of posting) represent an “extreme upper bound” of possible costs, indicating that costs are likely lower (Vol. II, “Bridge Structure,” p ES-7).

Modal Shift: No Significant Shift from Rail to Truck

Truck weight reform would have only a nominal impact on modal shift.

- The U.S. DOT calculated that six-axle vehicles weighing 97,000 pounds and 91,000 pounds would divert \$562 million and \$196 million, respectively, from rail—an industry worth \$70 billion (Vol. I, p ES-6, 39).
- Overall freight is projected to grow at nearly 2 percent per year (45 percent by 2040), indicating that freight growth would be greater than rail diversion (Vol. I, p ES-5).



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