

August 8, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries:

There is an active sign-on letter request for members to ask House leadership to bring H.R. 3372 to the floor for a vote. We urge you to reject this request and any proposals to increase the size or weight of trucks. Congress is all too familiar with these bigger truck proposals and has wisely rejected them over the years.

Some are urging Congress to raise federal truck weight limits above the current 80,000 pounds, with a proposed 91,000-pound "pilot project" found in H.R. 3372. This pilot would put heavier semi-trucks on federal interstates and connected roadways for a decade-long experiment at the expense of our infrastructure. Congress has consistently rejected any increase in national truck weight limits because of concerns for infrastructure damage. In 2015, the House voted on a bipartisan basis to maintain the federal limits. In 2016, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) delivered its three-year Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study Report requested by Congress. That report found that heavier trucks would impose additional costs to our highway infrastructure, and the Department recommended that Congress not approve any heavier trucks.

As we look to rebuild our roads and bridges, allowing heavier and longer trucks would only make this task more difficult. The U.S. Department of Transportation studied the impact of various longer and heavier truck configurations on interstate and U.S. highways and found that the additional cost of damage to both roads and bridges would require billions of dollars in new federal spending, adding to our budget deficit.

Increases in truck size and weight would have especially severe consequences for local roads and bridges because bigger trucks are not limited to the interstates. These heavier and longer trucks need to run on state and local roads to pick up and drop off freight, as well as for "reasonable access" for fuel, food and other necessities. Local roads and bridges face significantly more damage than interstates because they may be older, built to lower standards, or are already in poor condition.

Local bridges, in particular, will be the most at risk to heavier trucks:

- A recent analysis of over 470,000 local bridges from March 2023 found over 72,000 that are not rated to safely accommodate 91,000-pound trucks.
- These local bridges would need to be posted and eventually replaced, costing over \$60.8 billion.
- Allowing heavier trucks will only add to the pressure on state, county and municipal governments to find funds to repair these bridges when, at the same time, there are not sufficient revenues today to cover infrastructure maintenance costs.

If proponents are serious about collecting more comprehensive information about the impacts of heavier trucks, they should support the comprehensive research plans initiated by USDOT and the Transportation Research Board. Improving the collection of crash and travel data in the states where

heavier trucks already operate is the logical next step as opposed to expanding the operation of more dangerous trucks. Specific recommendations include the following:

- Reinststitute the collection of higher-quality, impartial data nationwide through datasets like Trucks in Fatal Accidents (TIFA) and the Vehicle Inventory Use Survey (VIUS), including data on vehicle miles traveled (VMT). When crashes occur, implement a uniform crash report form that accurately collects the number of trailers and axles, truck weight and length, and road type.
- Collect and analyze data on the impacts of bigger-truck operations on local roads and bridges.
- Conduct off-road operational tests of bigger-truck configurations, fully evaluating vehicle dynamics in real-world conditions.

For the stated reasons, we ask that you reject any legislative language that would increase current maximum truck weight or length limits, including proposals that would allow for a 91,000-pound federal interstate truck weight limit in H.R. 3372.

Sincerely,

American Public Works Association
National Association of Counties
National Association of County Engineers
National Association of Towns and Townships
National League of Cities
The United States Conference of Mayors
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association
Towing and Recovery Association of America, Inc.
AAA
Institute for Safer Trucking
Road Safe America
Truck Safety Coalition
Association of American Railroads
American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association
National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association
Railway Engineering-Maintenance Suppliers Association
Railway Supply Institute
SMART-TD
Coalition Against Bigger Trucks

cc: House of Representatives