The following information was provided to me by Anthony C. Livingston, State Director of Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, LLC.

He asks if Town Council would consider contacting our National Senator and oppose the proposed change. I will bring it up during the Town Manager Report and see if Council wants to add it to the agenda for the next meeting.

Immediate Action Needed: Please Oppose Bigger Trucks in Senate FMCSA Bill

The Senate Commerce Committee has announced plans to take up the reauthorization of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) following the August congressional recess. At that time there is likely to be a major vote on legislation that would allow a 20,000-pound increase in maximum truck weights.

Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine has stated that when the FMCSA legislation is considered in Committee, she will offer an amendment to include her bill (S. 1450, the Commercial Truck Safety Act of 2011), which would allow any state to operate 100,000-pound trucks as a three-year pilot project.

After three years, the heavier weight limit would become permanent unless the trucks were found to have negatively affected highway safety. S. 1450 is similar to House bigger truck legislation (H.R. 763) in that it would require a sixth axle on the heavier big rigs, but unlike the HR 763, the new Senate bill has no provision raising truck taxes or fees to cover any additional damage caused by the heavier trucks. In fact, the legislation completely ignores the massive infrastructure damage and taxpayer burdens that would come with such a huge increase in truck weights.

Summary

This legislation would allow ultra-heavy, more-dangerous trucks on Interstates in any state that requests them, endangering other motorists from the risks of rollover, longer stopping distances and more severe crashes. These heavier trucks would also dramatically increase damage to infrastructure – especially bridges -- without asking the trucking companies to cover even a portion of that damage, and would further erode the federal vehicle weight limit and bridge formula, which were put in place to protect our highways and bridges.

What We Need You to Do:

Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation need to hear from their constituents urging opposition to any proposals to allow bigger trucks when the Committee takes up the FMCSA legislation. This legislation could be considered as early as the second week in September. Please join the campaign against this threat to highway safety, infrastructure quality and scarce tax dollars.

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SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO KEEP TRUCKS FROM GETTING BIGGER

SHIPA would protect our roads and bridges by freezing the maximum weight of trucks traveling on the National Highway System, extending the existing freeze on Interstate operations of LCVs to the entire National Highway System, and capping the length of truck trailers.

The Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act (H.R. 1574, S. 876) was introduced in the US House of Representatives by Reps. James McGovern (MA-3) and Frank Wolf (VA-10) and in the US Senate by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (NJ). This legislation, if passed, would freeze the size and weight of trucks on our highways without rolling back any existing legal operations.

Freeze the weight of trucks

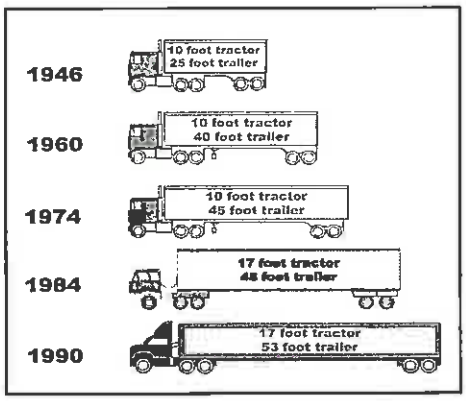
Congress set 80,000 pounds as the maximum weight at which a truck can operate on Interstate highways. Yet, because of loopholes in the law, trucks routinely operate on Interstates and other highways above 80,000 pounds. This bill would extend the truck weight limit beyond the 46,000-mile Interstate system to the entire 161,000 miles of National Highway System (NHS).

Extend the freeze on LCVs

In 1991, Congress "froze" the operation of longer combination vehicles (LCVs) – long double and triple trailer trucks – on Interstates and stopped LCVs from spreading onto a larger share of the Interstate system. These bills extend this freeze to the entire NHS.

Freeze the length of trucks

Today, there is no federal limit on the length of semi-trailers. Over the years, trailer length has grown such that eleven states allow trailers over 53 feet (the industry standard) and Wyoming even allows 60-foot-long trailers to operate. These bills will cap the length of truck trailers at 53 feet, but allow existing legal operations of trailers that exceed 53 feet to continue.



Prevent deficit spending

Today's trucks operating at the legal limit of 80,000 pounds only pay for 80% of the damage they cause.[1] Allowing trucks to operate at 97,000 pounds would result in these heavier trucks paying only half of their costs.[2] Nationwide operation of bigger trucks would add at least $50 billion in new bridge reconstruction costs, according to USDOT.[3] The construction and maintenance costs required by bigger trucks only add to our growing deficit.

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[1] *Addendum to the 1997 Highway Cost Allocation Study*, Federal Highway Administration, 2000.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study*, US Department of Transportation, 2000.

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National Organizations Opposing Truck Size & Weight Increases

National Troopers Coalition

National Sheriffs' Association

National Association of Police Organizations

International Association of Chiefs of Police

Western States Sheriffs' Association

AAA

National Association of Counties

Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association

International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Public Citizen

Consumer Federation of America

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

Truck Safety Coalition

Transportation for America

American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

Railway Supply Institute

Association of American Railroads

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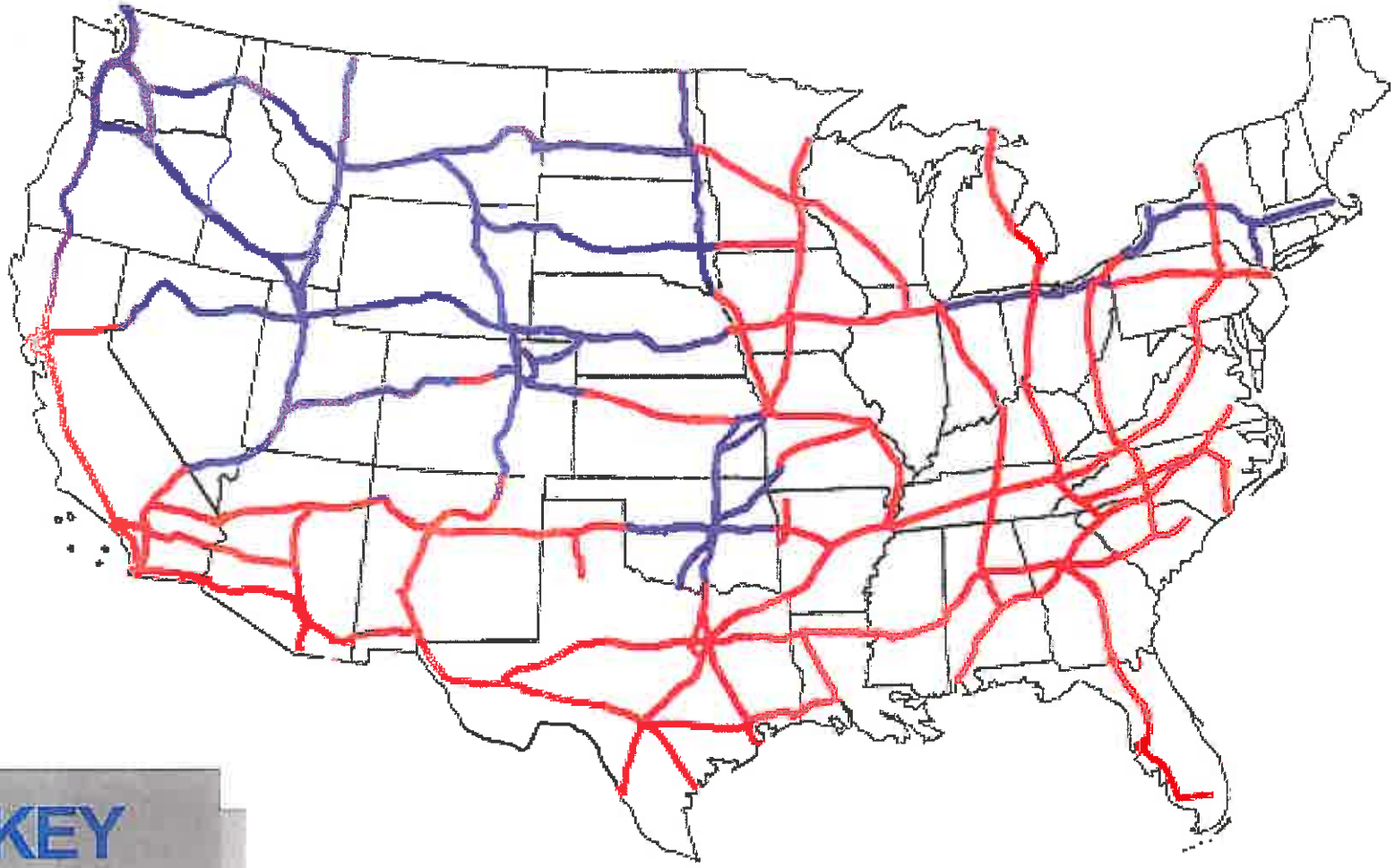
LCV Routes on Interstate Highways -- Existing and Proposed*



KEY

- Existing LCV Routes
- Proposed new LCV Routes**

Estimated Total Miles

Existing LCV Routes:	10,315
Proposed new LCV Routes :	18,440
Estimated total miles:	28,755

* Does not include non-interstate routes currently used by LCVs.

** The propsed new routes exclude unspecified "urban area interstates not currently used."

Bigger trucks = NEARLY 8 MILLION MORE TRUCKS

Bigger trucks have never resulted in fewer trucks. Why would they now?

Companies pushing for bigger trucks say that they would need fewer trucks to haul their goods so there would be fewer trucks on our roads. Unfortunately, they're wrong. Never has an increase in truck size or weight slowed the growth in the number of trucks on the road or the miles those trucks drive.

As John Adams said, "facts are stubborn things."

- The number of trucks registered in the U.S. and the mileage traveled by trucks has gone up nearly every single year since Congress last increased the federal weight limit in 1982. Then, as now, those pushing for bigger trucks said it would result in fewer trucks on the road, but the increase did not even slow the growth in truck traffic. (Highway Statistics, FHWA)
- Truck trailer lengths increased from 40 feet to 53 feet between 1980 and 1995. During this same period of time, rail merchandise traffic declined 29% while truck vehicle miles traveled grew by 56% (33% faster than GDP).

Stubborn Fact: Bigger trucks simply divert rail traffic onto highways.

According to a recent study, increasing truck weights to 97,000 pounds would divert enough freight from rail to highways to fill 11.1 million more trucks.

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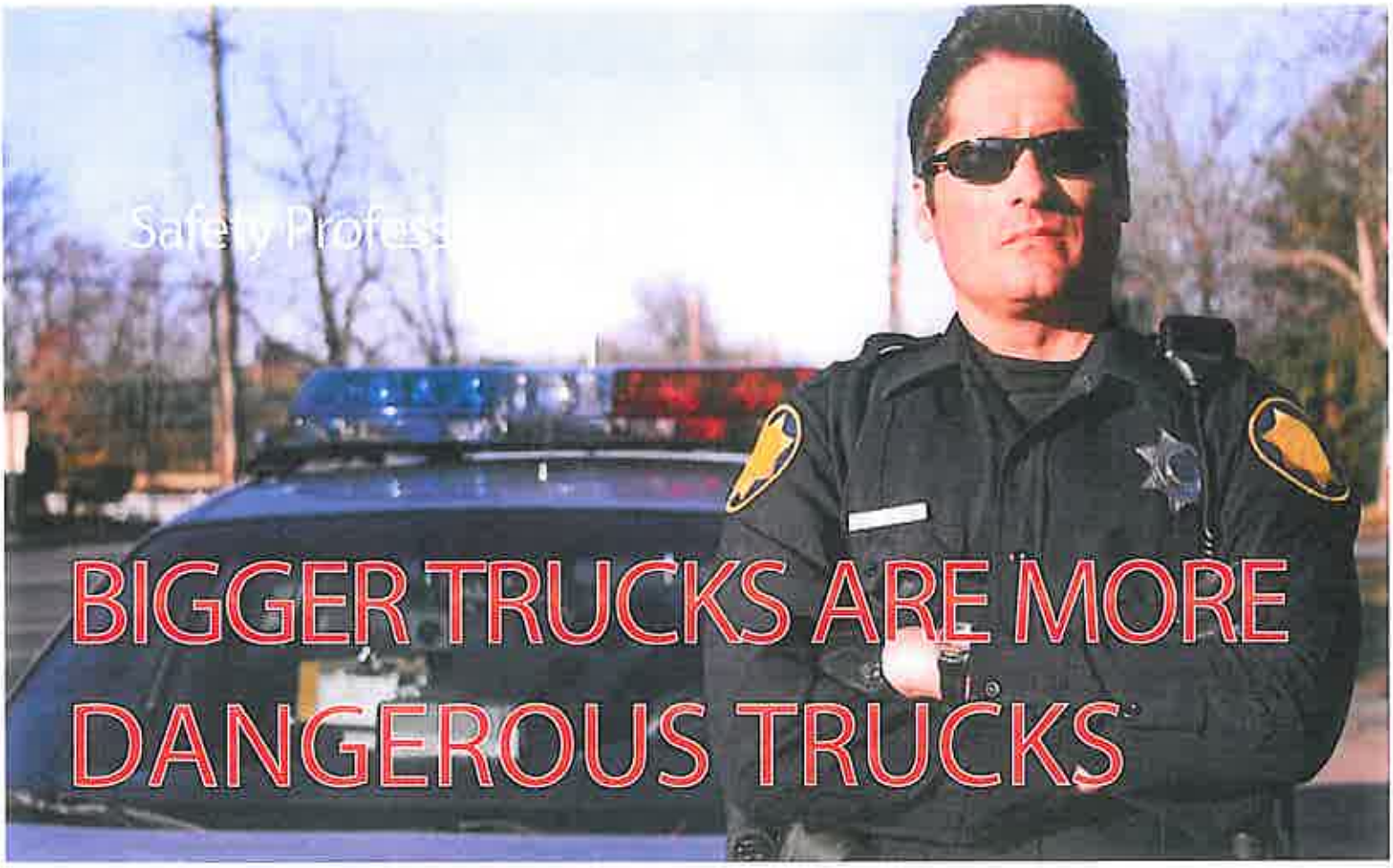
DO THE MATH: BIGGER TRUCKS = NEARLY 8 MILLION MORE TRUCKS

To understand how truck weight increases and rail diversion result in more trucks on the road, consider the scenario examined by a 2010 study by Dr. Carl Martland, Research Affiliate in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at MIT, which concluded that an increase in legal truck weights to 97,000 pounds could reduce overall rail traffic by 19%, but that's not the whole story:

- It would take 14.3 million trucks to carry the freight analyzed in the Martland study.
- Allowing these trucks to increase their legal weight from 80,000 pounds to 97,000 pounds would theoretically allow for this freight to ship in 3.4 million fewer trucks.
- However, Martland found that diversion of freight from rail back onto highways would add an additional 11.1 million trucks of freight to highways.
- Therefore, increasing truck weights would result in a net increase of nearly 8 million more trucks on our roads and bridges, a 56% increase.



BIGGER TRUCKS ARE MORE DANGEROUS TRUCKS

Safety leaders know first-hand that allowing heavier and longer trucks is a risky proposition.

National Troopers Coalition

"We strongly oppose any increase in truck weight. Trucks are big and heavy enough already. Any state trooper can attest that making trucks longer or heavier will only lead to more problems on our already overcrowded highways."

National Sheriffs' Association

"Increasing the weight on already large trucks poses a substantial risk to the traveling public and public safety officers who patrol these roadways. When large trucks lose control, they are apt to do significantly more damage, in terms of physical harm, loss of life, and property damage, than standard vehicle collisions on our increasingly congested roadways. An increase in weight for trucks would not only increase the stopping distance of these trucks and decrease the ability to steer and control in emergency situations, but would also transfer into an increased striking force when involved in a traffic collision, especially with a much smaller vehicle. Heavier trucks can also potentially increase the involvement of multiple vehicles in these kinds of crashes, resulting in higher number of injuries and fatalities."

Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance

"CVSA does not support enacting any significant legislative or regulatory changes to truck size and weight until such time as we have a more uniform, methodical and science-based approach to evaluating the safety, infrastructure and environmental cost and benefits."

AAA

"There remain significant unanswered questions regarding the balance between productivity, safety and impacts on infrastructure. Until research can fully address these issues, AAA remains opposed to any federal increases in the current truck size and weight limits."

JUST THE FACTS:

- Since 1998, over 17% of trucks inspected as a part of Operation Air Brake have been placed out of service due to braking issues. (CVSA)
- Increasing truck weight is likely to lead to brake maintenance problems and longer stopping distances. (USDOT)
- Heavier trucks tend to have a higher center of gravity, increasing the risk of rollovers. (USDOT)
- LCVs - particularly triples - are significantly more likely to experience trailer sway and the "crack the whip" effect than single tractor trailers. (USDOT)
- Large trucks have a fatal crash involvement rate 40% greater than passenger vehicles. (NHTSA)
- LCVs are likely to have fatal accident involvement rates at least 11% higher than single tractor trailers. (USDOT)
- Raising truck weight to 97,000 pounds could result in 8 million more truckloads on US roads. (Martland)

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Bigger Trucks don't just break bridges,

THEY BUST BUDGETS

Heavy trucks literally make bridges bounce, buckling pavement and stressing steel.

Engineers agree that heavy trucks already cause enormous damage to bridges, causing massive vibrations that literally make bridges bounce. Allowing heavier trucks will accelerate this deterioration. Bridges are designed with a safety margin of error to ensure against bridge failure. But heavier trucks erode that margin of error and increase the risk of catastrophic failure.

We can't afford to spend another $53 billion to pay for damage to bridges caused by bigger trucks.

Spending money will not solve our bridge infrastructure problem because we are never going to be able to repair or replace all the bridges we need to, due to sheer lack of time and resources. It would cost $188 billion to repair current structurally deficient bridges around the country. (US DOT Conditions and Performance Report, 2006)

We would have to spend an additional $53 billion to rebuild bridges if we allowed truck sizes and weights to go even higher than they are today. (US DOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study, 2000)

Instead of a $53 billion bridge bailout, why not preserve the bridges we already have?

Allowing heavier and longer trucks to operate would add new costs and increase the burden on taxpayers. Increasing truck size and weight would require that many bridges in the state be replaced, strengthened or posted — all of which would impose additional costs and unfunded mandates on cash-strapped state governments and, ultimately, the American taxpayer.

THE ALTERNATIVE? Keep the 80,000-pound weight limit and stop the spiraling cost of bridge repair BEFORE DAMAGE HAPPENS.

FAST FACTS: AMERICA'S BRIDGES ARE CRUMBLING. AND BIGGER TRUCKS WILL MAKE IT WORSE.

- More than half of the bridges on the National Highway System are more than 40 years old. (US DOT 2010 National Bridge Inventory)
- 1 of every 9 bridges — 69,223 — in the nation is already structurally deficient. (US DOT 2010 National Bridge Inventory)
- Forty years ago, when more than half of our bridges were built, there were about 2 million trucks on the road. Today, there are about 7 million trucks on the road.
- Until the mid-1970's, the legal limit on trucks was 73,280 pounds. Today it is 80,000 pounds. The proposals before Congress and in many states are to increase truck weights to 97,000 pounds and higher.

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BIGGER SUBSIDIES, BIGGER DEFICITS

Our highways and bridges are in rough shape because we don't have the resources to keep them in good condition. Yet, nearly every single truck trip on a U.S. road is an exercise in deficit spending because trucks on the road today don't cover the cost of the damage they do. Allowing even bigger trucks would make this problem even worse.

The additional cost of repairing bridge damage caused by raising truck weights to 97,000 pounds could top $53 billion alone. That's in addition to road damage. (USDOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study, 2000)

Trucks already receive $2 billion in subsidies. Bigger trucks mean even bigger subsidies.

Trucks cover only 80% of damage now, will only cover 50% of damage if bigger trucks are allowed to pound the pavement.

The most recent federal study to look at the issue showed that the federal government already subsidizes heavy truck operations almost $2 billion every year. (FHWA Addendum to Highway Cost Allocation Study, 2000)

- 80,000-pound single-trailer trucks only pay 80% of the cost of the damage they cause.
- The same study showed that increasing truck weights up to 97,000 pounds would result in trucks only paying for about 50% of the damage they do.
- If inflated to 2007 dollars, trucks on the road today would need to pay an additional $0.28 per gallon of diesel just to break even and 97,000-pound trucks would need to pay an additional $1.17 per gallon. (Full Recovery of Highway Costs Associated with Bigger Trucks, Norbridge, 2007)

Bigger trucks mean Bigger spending, Bigger deficits. The Highway Trust Fund is already broke.

- The Highway Trust Fund has already needed two cash infusions to stay solvent. Bigger trucks will make it worse.
- State highway departments are running out of money for key highway projects. Cities and schools across the country are cutting budgets to do more with less.
- Allowing even bigger trucks makes a problem we already can't afford to solve even worse. It means that every single truck trip costs other taxpayers even more money.

> **"WHEN LONGER COMBINATION VEHICLES (LCVs) AND OTHER HEAVY TRUCKS DO NOT PAY THE FULL COSTS OF THEIR OPERATIONS, OTHER MOTORISTS MUST MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE. THIS IS INEQUITABLE TO THE HIGHWAY USERS WHO MUST SUBSIDIZE LCV OPERATIONS."**
>
> **– WESTERN UNIFORMITY SCENARIO ANALYSIS, USDOT, 2004**

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