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Safe & Efficient Transportation Act (SETA) Reintroduced to Let States Raise Interstate Weight Limits for Trucks with Additional Axles

Bipartisan Champions in House Introduce SETA to Minimize Truckloads and Improve Safety, Environmental Efficiency & Productivity of U.S. Truck Shipments

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Feb. 18, 2011) – The Coalition for Transportation Productivity (CTP), a group of more than 180 shippers and associations dedicated to responsibly increasing federal weight limits on interstate highways, today announced that federal truck weight reform known as the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act (SETA) has been reintroduced in the House of Representatives by Reps. Mike Michaud (D-Maine) and Jean Schmidt (R-Ohio) as H.R. 763. The bill’s reintroduction comes as Congress considers the first Highway Reauthorization package in more than six years.

“SETA provides a critical opportunity for Congress to enact a Highway Reauthorization proposal that modernizes American truck shipping standards in order to protect motorists and the environment, and give U.S. manufacturers and producers a competitive edge,” said CTP Executive Director John Runyan. “Many shippers hit the 30-year-old federal weight limit with significant space left in their rigs and must use more truckloads, fuel and vehicle miles than necessary to get products to market. SETA gives each state the option to correct this inefficiency by raising its interstate weight limit for trucks equipped with an additional axle. Six-axle trucks can safely handle more weight, so American companies can utilize more rig space, minimize the trucks they need to meet demand and reduce their dependency on foreign oil.”

“Major trading partners such as Canada, Mexico and the European Union have already implemented higher truck weight limits, meaning that America is now at a productivity disadvantage. Without SETA, the inefficiency we are experiencing will only worsen. The American Trucking Associations estimates that the trucking industry will haul 30 percent more tonnage in 2021 than it does today. If current weight restrictions remain the same, that means our economy will require 18 percent more trucks on the road driving 27 percent more miles than they do now. If lawmakers look at the facts, we are confident that SETA will be included in the long-awaited Highway Reauthorization package.”

The U.S. federal weight limit has been set at 80,000 pounds since 1982 – forcing shippers that meet this limit with space left in their trailers to use more trucks and fuel than necessary. The goal of SETA is to make truck transportation safer and more sustainable by giving states the ability to adjust federal weight limits on interstates within their borders. Under SETA, each state would have the option to set interstate weight limits of up to 97,000 pounds -- giving shippers the

ability to utilize more truck space. The higher weight limit would only apply to trucks equipped with six axles instead of the typical five. Without making the truck any larger, the additional axle maintains safety specifications, including stopping capability and current weight per tire.

About the Coalition for Transportation Productivity

The Coalition for Transportation Productivity (CTP) is a coalition of more than 180 shippers and allied associations dedicated to addressing the safety, economic and environmental challenges facing our nation's freight transportation network through carefully crafted truck weight reform. For more information, visit www.transportationproductivity.org.

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