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Coalition for Transportation Productivity Applauds Bipartisan Senate Bill Giving States Option to Raise Interstate Weight Limits

The Safe & Efficient Transportation Act Represents Significant Step for Truck Weight Reform, Safer Highways & Greener, More Efficient Shipping

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Aug. 5, 2010) – The Coalition for Transportation Productivity (CTP), a group of more than 160 shippers and allied associations dedicated to responsibly increasing federal weight limits on interstate highways, today applauded Sens. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Herb Kohl (D-Wis.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) for introducing the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act, S. 3705, in the U.S. Senate.

Like identical companion legislation now pending in the House of Representatives, the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act would permit state DOTs to raise interstate weight limits within their states to 97,000 pounds for trucks equipped with six axles instead of five. Without making the truck any larger, the additional axle maintains safety specifications, including stopping capability and current weight per tire. The Safe and Efficient Transportation Act would safely make the shipment of heavier cargo more efficient, as many trucks meet the current 80,000-pound federal weight limit with significant space in their rigs. Under the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act, shippers could safely utilize extra cargo space and reduce truck loads, fuel, emissions and vehicle miles traveled for each ton of freight shipped.

“With freight increases in the forecast, the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act would make roads safer, greener and more efficient – both now and in the future,” said CTP Executive Director John Runyan. “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. The Safe and Efficient Transportation Act would ease the burden on our roads by adjusting weight limits to safely reduce the number of trucks required to ship a given amount of goods.”

“The truck weight reform outlined in the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act is not a new concept,” Runyan added. “The UK raised its gross vehicle weight limit to 97,000 pounds for six-axle vehicles in 2001 and has experienced exactly what we need in the U.S. More freight has been shipped, yet vehicle miles traveled have leveled off and fatal truck-related accident rates have declined by 35 percent. Additionally, the Wisconsin DOT found that a law like the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act would have prevented 90 truck-related accidents on Wisconsin roads during 2006.”

The Safe and Efficient Transportation Act, H.R. 1799, was originally introduced in the House of Representatives by Reps. Michael Michaud (D-ME) and Jean Schmidt (R-OH). It currently has 54 cosponsors.

About the Coalition for Transportation Productivity

The Coalition for Transportation Productivity (CTP) is a coalition of more than 160 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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