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Coalition for Transportation Productivity Applauds Obama Administration for Asking Congress to Make Maine/VT Interstate Truck Weight Increase Permanent

At Sen. Collins' Request, President Includes Truck Weight Provision in the Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution – Citing Safety Benefits

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Sept. 17, 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 the Obama Administration for including a provision in the Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution that formally asks Congress make permanent two pilot programs that give heavier, six-axle trucks full access to interstate highways in Maine and Vermont.

Prior to the pilots, introduced last year by Sens. Susan Collins (R-ME) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT), commercial vehicles weighing over 80,000 pounds were often barred from interstate travel and diverted onto state and local roads.

In its message to Congress, the Administration credited the pilot programs – set to expire in December – with having improved safety and productivity on Maine and Vermont highways: “Continuing the program will improve safety on local roads and increase efficiency of commercial trucking in the region,” the Administration said in its request.

“The Administration’s efforts represent a significant breakthrough in the fight for trucking industry safety and productivity,” said CTP Executive Director John Runyan. “CTP members know first-hand that heavier trucks belong on better-engineered interstate highways, and we would like to thank President Obama and Sen. Collins for their efforts to make sure the transportation networks in Maine and Vermont remain safe and efficient for motorists, truckers and pedestrians.

“As the Administration stated, roads in Maine and Vermont have become much safer since interstates were opened to more productive trucks,” continued Runyan. “But other states deserve the same chance to improve highway safety and productivity. CTP supports federal legislation called the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act (SETA) because it would extend this same opportunity to all states. Originally introduced by Rep. Mike Michaud, SETA would give each state the option to raise interstate weight limits for six-axle, higher productivity trucks. We believe the efforts underway in Maine and Vermont greatly improve SETA’s ability to become law.”

About the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act (SETA)

The Safe and Efficient Transportation Act (H.R. 1799 / S. 3705) would permit states to set interstate weight limits of up to 97,000 pounds for 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. SETA 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 SETA, shippers could safely utilize extra cargo space and reduce truck loads, fuel, emissions and vehicle miles traveled for each ton of freight shipped.

SETA was originally introduced in the House of Representatives by Reps. Michael Michaud (D-ME) and Jean Schmidt (R-OH). It currently has 54 cosponsors. In August, Sens. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Herb Kohl (D-Wis.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) introduced identical Senate legislation.

About the Coalition for Transportation Productivity

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