

Coalition for Transportation Productivity

Mission

The Coalition for Transportation Productivity is a broad coalition of shippers and associations whose mission is to improve transportation productivity. We seek the enactment of legislation to increase gross vehicle weight to 97,000 pounds on federal interstate highways on vehicles equipped with an additional axle as a way to address the environmental, economic, and safety challenges facing our nation's freight transportation network.

We are willing to pay for this benefit through a user fee on units equipped with the additional axle to be dedicated for bridge repair. Our intent is to have these changes included in the 2009 Highway Reauthorization or other energy / climate change / infrastructure-related legislation.

Background: Energy, Climate Crises Demand New Approach

Raising weight limits for specially equipped and permitted vehicles could significantly reduce fuel use and carbon emissions without compromising safety. This change will spur investment in upgraded equipment, create jobs and transition the U.S. to a more efficient transportation network.

Road Congestion, Competitiveness Aided by Adjusting Weight Limits

Freight hauled by trucks in the U.S. is expected to at least double by 2025 and truck traffic is growing 11 times faster than road capacity. Efforts to improve trucking productivity are critical to addressing these challenges. Most other developed nations - including Canada, Mexico and the EU - have moved to higher weight limits.

History of Vehicle Weight Regulations

As of 1982, all states adopted 80,000 pounds as the limit on federal interstate highways. Much has changed since then: vehicle miles traveled have nearly doubled and real GDP has increased 220% - yet roads are now safer. Fatal accidents per 100 million miles traveled are now half the 1982 level.

Many technological and regulatory changes have helped improve safety:

- Anti-lock brakes
- Hours of service changes and drug testing for commercial vehicle drivers
- Improved trailer signage and lighting

<u>Concern</u>	<u>Response</u>
Safety	Transportation Research Board study shows additional axle maintains braking capacity at 97,000 limit
Road wear	Sixth axle reduces per tire weight displacement limiting road wear
Bridges	Permit fee dedicated to bridge repair will offset impact and generate funds for needed infrastructure repair

The Time Is Right

International competitiveness, fuel efficiency, environmental performance and infrastructure constraints can be addressed, at least in part, by taking a step already proven to be successful in most of the developed world – increasing the federal weight limit for specially outfitted trucks.