

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 30, 2010

## **HR 1799 - The Safe and Efficient Transportation Act**

Dear Colleague:

We write to you today, as Members of the Committee on Agriculture, asking that you support H.R. 1799, the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act. As cosponsors, we support this legislation because it will provide much needed support to the agriculture industry, improve the efficiency of the trucks on our nation's roads and decrease the number of accidents on our highways.

At some point, almost all agriculture travels by truck. Unfortunately, with the current federal weight limit set at 80,000 pounds on most parts of the Interstate System, many trucks are forced to leave the loading dock half-full. H.R. 1799 would give each state the option of increasing truck weight limits on the Interstate up to 97,000 pounds, so long as trucks are equipped with a sixth axle to maintain the same braking capacity as trucks that are currently on the road. As a result, the agriculture industry would be able to ship products more efficiently.

### **The Safe and Efficient Transportation Act:**

- **Makes our agriculture more competitive** in the world market. Nearly every other industrialized country in the world allows more weight on their federal highways than we do currently.
- **Enhances highway safety** by reducing the number of trucks needed to haul goods and by helping to move the heaviest trucks off smaller, less safe secondary roads and onto the Interstate System.
- **Simplifies hauling** from the U.S. to Canada and Mexico for a smoother flow of trade.
- **Reduces pollution** by slowing the growth rate of truck vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT). There is a direct correlation between truck VMT and CO2 emissions. Having fewer trucks to haul our agriculture goods will lead to a reduction in pollution.
- **Saves billions of dollars** in industry shipping costs and in pavement restoration costs due to the "softer footprint" on the highways from the addition of a sixth axle on the trailer.
- **Is not a federal mandate** – instead, each state would determine whether this legislation is in their best interest, giving state Departments of Transportation and legislators a voice in this deliberation.
- **Applies only to single-trailer vehicles.** This bill would not affect double or triple trailers.

The 2002 Transportation Research Board's *Special Report 267* found that allowing 97,000 pound single-trailer trucks on our Interstates would decrease the costs of moving freight by over \$5 billion each year while simultaneously reducing accidents on our highways. In addition, the United Kingdom recently conducted their own analysis after increasing their truck weight limit to 97,000 pounds in 2001. They found that over the past six years, truck VMT has slowed while freight continued to grow. Most importantly, accident and fatality numbers decreased substantially. Until we remove the outdated truck weight freeze on our Interstates, we will not be able to achieve similar results in the U.S.


If a cattle rancher, sugar producer or corn farmer can ship their goods utilizing 15 trucks each day instead of 20, the shipping savings, environmental benefits and safety impacts are clearly evident. Organizations such as the American Feed Industry Association, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the International Dairy Foods Association, the National Chicken Council, the National Grain and Feed Association, the National Potato Council, the National Milk Producers Federation, the American Frozen Food Institute, the Soy Transportation Coalition and many more support giving states more discretion to determine appropriate truck weights. They all want ways to increase their ability to compete in the world market while reducing carbon emissions. We believe H.R. 1799 will go a long way in helping the agriculture community do just that.

We hope you will join with us and more than 50 other Members of Congress, including Chairman Peterson and 9 Members of the Agriculture Committee, as a cosponsor of H.R. 1799. We can create safer highways for all our country's travelers while simultaneously helping the struggling agriculture industry. For more information, or to cosponsor the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act of 2009, please contact Dustin Hilt ([dustin.hilt@mail.house.gov](mailto:dustin.hilt@mail.house.gov) or 5-6306).

Sincerely,



STEVE KAGEN  
Member of Congress




JEAN SCHMIDT  
Member of Congress



HENRY CUELLAR  
Member of Congress



LEONARD L. BOSWELL  
Member of Congress



WALT MINNICK  
Member of Congress



FRANK KRATOVIL, JR  
Member of Congress



MICHAEL K. CONAWAY  
Member of Congress



BOBBY BRIGHT  
Member of Congress



BETSY MARKEY  
Member of Congress