

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 2015

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
2164 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

As the Committee develops surface transportation infrastructure legislation, we write to express our support for inclusion of a pilot program that would further safety and infrastructure protection. This program would permit a limited number of states to allow operation of vehicles weighing up to 91,000 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW) on Interstate System Highways – under conditions that are in the best interest of the public.


This pilot program would allow a state to permit vehicles equipped with six axles, which would have to be bridge formula compliant and meet weight per axle tests. The pilot program would reduce the growth in the amount of trucks on our roads and increase efficiencies for businesses that rely on trucks to transport products, by allowing a given amount of cargo to be carried in fewer vehicles. Increasing the allowable GVW on Interstate Highway System, this pilot program will work to reduce congestion on roads, thus lowering fuel consumption and mitigating exhaust emissions. Furthermore, the required additional axle (compared to conventional configurations) more widely distributes the vehicle weight which reduces pavement stress. Also, the additional axle comes with additional brakes, increasing braking power. Participation by any state would be totally voluntary; there is no mandate in the program. The provision concerns the Interstate Highway System; it does not broadly authorize pilot program vehicles to operate on local roads. The program provides the option to participate to up to ten states for a period approximating the useful life of the extra axle trailer that would be needed.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has identified the lack of data pertaining to the loaded weight of a truck at the time of a crash as a data gap. States choosing to voluntarily participate in the pilot program would collect safety data of the GVW of a truck in the event of a crash, addressing that data gap. However, there are many reasons to expect safety will be strengthened. DOT's most recent study found the 91,000 pound, six-axle vehicle handled similarly to the five-axle 80,000 pound GVW vehicle that has been the standard since 1982 when Congress last set the general weight limit for the Interstate Highway System. The study also found that the six-axle vehicle had a one foot shorter braking distance. In addition, in many states trucks that exceed 80,000 pounds are already permitted to operate on lower classification roads, driving through neighborhoods, by schools, and around other densely populated areas. This ten state pilot

program will shift truck traffic to the Interstate Highway System, reducing the need for trucks to drive on smaller, less safe roads.

This carefully crafted data collection pilot program provision holds promise for safer and more efficient trucking. This provision will allow us to collect the data necessary to evaluate the benefits of a new 91,000 pound, six-axle configuration with a limited pilot program that provides up to ten states with the option to participate. We urge you to include the provision in upcoming legislation. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



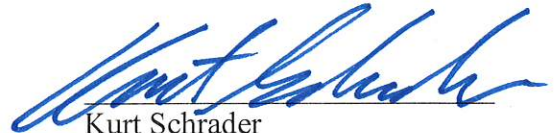
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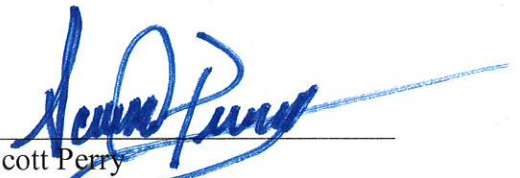
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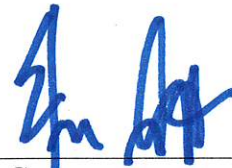
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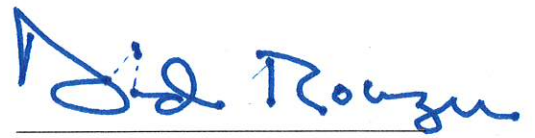
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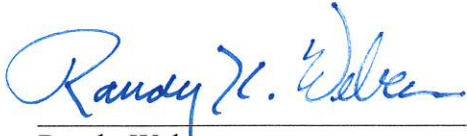
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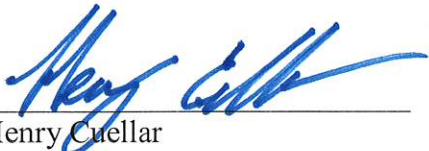
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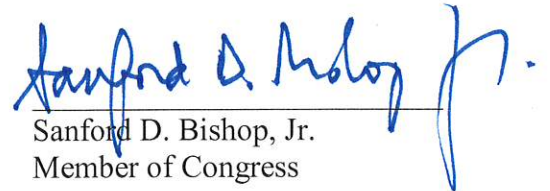
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