

March 18, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Carper, Chair
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito, Ranking Member
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Chair
Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee

The Honorable Ted Cruz, Ranking Member
Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Susan Collins, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Sam Graves, Chair
House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

The Honorable Kay Granger, Chair
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairs Carper, Cantwell, Murray, Graves and Granger, and Ranking Members Capito, Cruz, Collins, Larsen and DeLauro:

We are writing to express our serious concern with recent legislation introduced in the House of Representatives: the Modernizing Operations for Vehicles in Emergencies Act (MOVE Act – H.R. 7496). This bill would give governors unilateral authority to increase truck weights on interstates in response to an emergency or “other unusual conditions”. This bill would also greatly expand what is considered an emergency, and would not apply solely to natural disasters. If passed, this bill would allow a governor to declare an emergency when the “supply chain function is substantially impaired in the state”, a broad definition that would only be defined by the Governor of each state. The bill contains no maximum weight limit.

Interstate weight limits are the exclusive authority of Congress. The MOVE Act would circumvent congressional authority, extending power to governors to allow them to make subjective decisions on supply chain issues. This is flawed national policy, and we ask you to oppose H.R. 7496 in the House or any companion bill introduced in the Senate. Arbitrary criteria for deeming a supply chain emergency creates a blank check for states to preempt federal regulation on truck weight, and will undoubtedly lead to dangerous road conditions.

By any measure, our roads and bridges need continued repair, rebuilding and investment. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), gave the nation’s roads a grade of “D” in its 2021 Infrastructure Report Card. The nation’s bridges did not fare much better, with a “C” grade. The report stated 42 percent of the bridges in this country are at least 50 years old, and 7.5 percent are structurally deficient. According to ASCE, the estimate for the nation’s backlog of bridge repair needs is \$125 billion.

As we look to rebuild our roads and bridges, allowing heavier and longer trucks would only make this task more difficult. The U.S. Department of Transportation studied the impact of various longer and heavier truck configurations on interstate and U.S. highways and found that the additional cost of damage to both roads and bridges would require billions of dollars in new federal spending, adding to our budget deficit.

Increases in truck length and weight would have particularly severe consequences for local infrastructure, especially bridges. A 2023 analysis of over 470,000 local bridges (*The Impact of Heavier Trucks on Local Bridges, March 2023*) found over 72,000 could not safely accommodate 91,000-pound trucks. These local bridges would need to be posted and eventually replaced, costing over \$60.8 billion. This will only add to the

pressure on state and local governments to find funds to repair these bridges when, at the same time, there are not sufficient revenues today to cover infrastructure maintenance costs.

For the stated reasons, we ask that you reject any legislative language that would increase current maximum truck weight or length limits, including proposals that would allow governors to unilaterally increase trucks weights on interstates.

Sincerely,

American Public Works Association
National Association of Counties
National Association of County Engineers
National Association of Towns and Townships
National League of Cities
The United States Conference of Mayors
AAA
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association
Towing and Recovery Association of America, Inc.
Institute for Safer Trucking
Road Safe America
American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association
National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association
Railway Engineering-Maintenance Suppliers Association
Railway Supply Institute
Coalition Against Bigger Trucks

cc: Congress