



## The Coalition for Transportation Productivity

Making Roads Safer | Protecting the Environment | Strengthening the Economy

[www.transportationproductivity.org](http://www.transportationproductivity.org)

July 6, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of nearly 200 of the nation's top manufacturers, shippers, carriers and allied associations, the Coalition for Transportation Productivity takes this opportunity to highlight key findings from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study.

The actual study data provides strong support for allowing trucks equipped with six axles to carry more freight on Interstate System highways. This is the real message for Congress, despite the fact that U.S. DOT political leadership, after three years of study and 1,100 pages of released data, wrote a cover letter citing insufficient information and recommending against any changes in truck size and weight regulations. While the Administration could not find a political path to support truck weight reform, we urge members of Congress to review the study findings for themselves and allow carefully crafted reforms in vehicle weight regulation to move forward.

As noted in the enclosed one-page summary document, the U.S. DOT technical findings, including the results of actual vehicle tests, are clear. Relative to five-axle trucks weighing up to 80,000 pounds, heavier, six-axle trucks of identical size maintain key truck safety characteristics, including safe stopping distances and turning capability, providing every reason to believe they will perform safely if allowed the chance to operate more widely than they are today.

One of the most notable findings of the DOT study is the minimal diversion of freight from rail to truck as a result of more productive trucks. Such a small amount of freight diversion is more than offset by the projected higher overall growth of freight volume for all modes. The study also found that heavier, six-axle trucks would reduce vehicle miles traveled, reduce total national logistics costs, reduce pavement restoration costs with manageable bridge impacts and reduce fuel consumption and emissions.

The Administration has unfortunately adopted a kind of "Catch 22" approach to the badly needed modernization of our nation's truck weight laws by opposing the wider use of the six-axle vehicles that would result in the greater data that it says is needed. In justifying its call for inaction, the Administration also plucked findings from the "statistically insignificant" data pointing to a higher crash rate for six-axle trucks compared to five-axle trucks operating over a limited time period in one state. What is not said in the letter, but is included in the technical report, is that there were no fatalities involving six-axle trucks in that state during that period, which was not the case for the five-axle trucks.

Before closing, we also wish to emphasize that we support an approach to truck weight reform that is not preemptive. We simply want to give individual states the option to allow six-axle vehicles at heavier weights on their Interstate System highways. Nothing in our approach reduces state and local authority over truck weights on so-called "local" roads and bridges.

As you work on transportation legislation and consider ways to improve highway efficiency, we hope you will consider vehicle weight reform as a way to safely advance the international competitiveness of our nation's manufacturers and shippers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Runyan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent than the last name "Runyan".

John Runyan  
Executive Director  
Coalition for Transportation Productivity

Enclosure