Cannon Moss
President

VIRGINIA RAILROAD ASSOCIATION
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August 7, 2018

Mr. Keith Wandtke
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Truck Weight Study

Dear Mr. Wandtke:

On behalf of the Virginia Railroad Association, we are pleased to submit written comments to the Virginia Department of Transportation as part of the stakeholders working group for Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly. We participated extensively in the discussion and debate around this legislation during the 2018 Virginia General Assembly session.

The Virginia Railroad Association represents nine short line railroads, as well as the two Class I railroads – CSX and Norfolk Southern Corporation – operating in Virginia. Collectively, these railroads operate more than 3,000 miles of track across the Commonwealth. Short line railroads are local railroads that primarily provide freight haulage, line haul, or terminal switching services. The short line railroads in Virginia typically operate on lines once owned and operated by the Class I railroads. They provide a critical transportation link to a variety of industries hauling items such as grain, coal, chemicals, construction materials, and fertilizer, connecting industries to the Class I rail network and the Port of Virginia, and in turn connecting them to customers around the globe.

We are fortunate that the Commonwealth of Virginia understands the importance of investing in rail infrastructure. By diverting freight traffic from road to rail, Virginia's rail network helps grow the economy, relieve congestion, save lives, improve air quality, and complements the Virginia highway network while reducing the state's capital and maintenance expenditures. According to the 2017 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan, 100 freight rail cars carry the same amount of freight as 340 semi-trailer trucks, and shipping by rail provides $312 million annually in congestion savings and $123 million per year in savings to annual pavement maintenance, which equates to roughly 6% of the Virginia Department of Transportation's maintenance budget. Furthermore, shipping by rail avoids about 1.7 billion miles of truck travel in Virginia.

All of this is critically important due to the congestion already existing on Virginia's highways and roadways and the existing condition of our highway infrastructure. Below I will detail the specific issues and implications the railroad industry believes should be utilized to evaluate any pilot project, if a pilot program is adopted in Washington.

1. VDOT Should Know Exactly What It Is Being Asked to Evaluate

As originally drafted, House Bill 1276 and Senate Bill 504 (2018) gave broad authorization to the Commissioner of Highways to enroll in or withdraw from any federal pilot program or project for the collection and study of data for the review of truck weights and the impact of such vehicles on federal or state roadway safety, infrastructure sustainability, congestion mitigation, transportation system efficiency, or capacity challenges, the duration of which could be no longer than 15 years. The legislation was eventually amended to call for the work study group, led by VDOT, to examine several critical issues that would be associated with any such pilot program.

Proponents cited as an impetus for the bill failed attempts to enact a federal pilot in Congress. In 2015, an amendment[1] to the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act that would have allowed a state pilot program for 91,000 lbs. trucks failed on a bipartisan 187-236 vote. In 2017, proponents attempted to amend the Appropriations Act to include this pilot, which was also unsuccessful. Absent a July 23, 2018 letter of support for a pilot program from 47 of the 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives – which only one member of Virginia's 11 member U.S. House delegation signed– to the leadership of the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, there is no current proposal being considered by the U.S. House or Senate.

So, at this point, VDOT will be evaluating only theoretical ideas and proposals, and not an actual pilot program. Before any evaluation occurs, a pilot program must first actually be enacted. Advocates for the 2018 legislation asserted that Virginia needed to be ready to act in the event a federal pilot program were made available. With no current proposals before Congress, and with the failure of the last several attempts to create any such program, it stands to reason that *if* a pilot program is created, it could look very different from that which was last considered in Washington. The Commonwealth should know exactly what they are entering into before determining if it is in the best interest of Virginia.

2. Any Pilot Program Should Include Additional Road and Bridge Funding

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)[2], trucks currently only pay for 80% of the infrastructure damage they cause. Furthermore, the Department indicates that the heaviest combinations – those weighing over 80,000 lbs. – pay only half of their cost responsibility. Like many states, Virginia has more road improvement projects than funding available, and allowing increased truck weights without any additional money for road maintenance will only widen that gap.

Concerns over wear and tear on Virginia's roadways is a critical concern, but also the condition of the Commonwealth's other road infrastructure needs to be considered. In the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) most recent 2015 Report Card for Virginia's Infrastructure, many of our infrastructure elements received below average grades. Specifically, our bridges

[1] See *H.Amdt. 747 to H.R. 22 (FAST ACT) – 114th Congress (2015-2016)*
[2] See USDOT *Addendum to 1997 FHC Allocation Study 2000*

were graded a "C". The report card states that "56% of Virginia's structures are approaching the end of their anticipated design life having been in service for more than 40 years" and that "in 2013, Virginia's inventory included 23.2% (of bridges) that were either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete".

VDOT viewed the Commonwealth's bridge infrastructure similarly when evaluating House Bill 214 and Senate Bill 73 in 2018. These identical bills provided that no vehicle issued an overweight permit for hauling Virginia-grown farm produce, regardless of the vehicle's axle weights or axle spacing, shall cross any bridge or culvert in the Commonwealth if the gross weight of such vehicle is greater than the amount posted for the bridge or culvert as its carrying capacity. In estimating the fiscal impact for the bill, VDOT determined that "to ensure public safety, bridges that could be susceptible to being overloaded by these more "weight intensive" vehicles would need to be reassessed or load rated again" and that "the bill will also have a fiscal impact upon VDOT because of increased wear and tear on these bridges resulting from heavier vehicles using them. The total one-time load rating and signage costs of roughly $22 million and the ongoing wear and tear costs on the bridges would have to be covered by redirecting funding within the agency's budget from other transportation priorities".

Even when the bill was amended to provide that no five-axle-combination vehicle shall be issued an overweight permit for hauling Virginia-grown farm produce unless such vehicle has no less than 42 feet of axle space between extreme axles, VDOT stated that:

> "It is difficult to precisely quantify the increase in bridge maintenance needs that will be incurred by the passage of this bill, but the aggregate valuation of the bridge inventory is estimated by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to decrease by approximately $15 million per year. Consistent with studies looking at the impact of increased vehicle weights on bridges, VDOT based its estimate on the additional approximate lost value per non-Interstate structure that would be incurred due to higher loads, assuming that each structure would deteriorate 4 percent faster. This does not include additional maintenance costs, which could be substantial. In addition, structures with longer spans would experience increased deterioration rates".

Virginia has a number of overweight permits available for a variety of industries that go over 80,000 lbs., such as for Virginia-grown produce, forest products, and aggregate haulers. These permits have been made available for specific industries with explicit needs on a limited basis. Understanding that reasonable exceptions sometimes need to be made to accommodate certain industries, the railroad industry has not opposed these efforts. What is problematic is a statewide pilot program for heavier trucks that carries no additional funding for road and bridge maintenance.

Permits are available for these specific industries with payment of increased fees, a large majority of which goes to the Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund (HMOF). Understanding the current structure of permits in Virginia and the unknown increase in road and bridge maintenance costs that would be necessary if a pilot were available to any industry statewide should necessarily be part of the study.

At the June meeting of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), a pavement and bridge overview was provided by VDOT which stated that the majority of existing bridges in Virginia were designed for less than 80,000 pounds. Until it is known which bridges are not suited for heavier loads, Virginia should not enter to a pilot program allowing trucks that are 5.5 tons heavier.

As a competitor of large commercial trucks for heavy hauls, the railroad industry is rightfully concerned that railroads are charged with maintaining their own infrastructure whereas heavy trucks essentially receive a public subsidy. Class I railroads spend billions of dollars maintaining their tracks across the country. If trucks are already not paying their full share of road maintenance, and increased truck weights would cause that amount to lessen, rail transportation will be further disadvantaged, a reckless public policy when one considers the merits of a strong freight rail system: congestion relief, public safety enhancements, improved air quality and reduction is public expenditures for highway construction and maintenance.

3.The Data Available on Axle Spacing Do Not Indicate Heavier Trucks are Safer

Proponents of allowing 91,000 lbs. trucks in Virginia state that the presence of a sixth axle on these trucks comes with additional brakes, increasing braking power[3]. In their report to Congress on truck weights from April 2016[4], the USDOT analyzed available safety data for a variety of increased truck configuration and weight combinations. With regards to six-axle 91,000 lbs. trucks, the report found that in the one state (Washington State) where data was analyzed, there was a significant (47%) crash rate *increase*. Additionally, this report found that these trucks were not in fact safer. 91,000 lbs. trucks had slightly higher violation, out-of-service, and citation rates, and configurations over 80,000 pounds were found to have 18% more brake violations and a higher number of brake violations per inspection.

The crash and braking data is noteworthy due to our already overly crowded interstate highway system. Just last year, INRIX, a Kirkland, Washington-based traffic data firm, named the stretch of Interstate 95 between the Fairfax County Parkway and Fredericksburg the worst traffic "hot spot" in the country for congestion. Interstate 81, well-known for heavy truck traffic congestion, also has the added factor of having widely varying elevations that make braking all that much more important. And just this summer VDOT has identified the extraordinary length of traffic delays to clear truck accidents in the I-81 Corridor.

Advocates for heavier trucks will posit that the additional axle and the spacing better distribute the weight of a heavier truck, causing it to have a less harmful impact on roads and bridges. However, a 91,000 lbs. truck is still 5.5 tons heavier than an 80,000 lbs. truck, and no matter how it is distributed, it would be substantially added weight on a bridge. Even if the impact on infrastructure were less, those effects do not outweigh the safety concerns. The simple physics of a crash involving a 91,000 lbs. truck means it is likely to be even more dangerous and deadly with so much added weight.

[3] See Letter to Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio, July 23, 2018
[4] See *USDOT Final Report, Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, April 2016*

4.The Latest Federal Proposal is for Interstates – but Trucks Do Not Load and Offload on Interstates

Undoubtedly, any pilot program for heavier trucks would have to allow for their travel on primary and secondary roads, in addition to interstate highways. While the latest federal pilot floated in Washington stated the project was just for interstate highways that is simply not feasible, as trucks do not load and offload on the interstate. We would defer to the localities and municipalities when it comes to providing reasonable access to these roads and what the impact might be on the local communities. Given the known conditions of the Commonwealth's road and bridge infrastructure, we believe VDOT at the very least would need to evaluate all of Virginia's roads and bridges to determine the safety of their carrying an additional 5.5 tons.

5.Other Factors That Need to be Considered

Proponents of heavier trucks have stated the need for a federal pilot program in order for truckers and manufacturers to be competitive. They state that such a program will allow them to haul more goods with less trucks at lower costs. Proponents cite the physical presence in Virginia of large manufacturers, including the number of Virginians they employ and their impact on the state's economy. It should be noted what the railroad industry also provides. Virginia's 2017 Statewide Rail Plan states that rail services drive 6% of Virginia's total economy and that there are more than 6,000 jobs created directly by our rail network. One of Virginia's two Class I railroads – Norfolk Southern - is also headquartered here.

Simply allowing for heavier trucks because certain industries say they need them to be more competitive would put VDOT into the position of picking winners and losers and tilting the tables to favor those winners.

Further, research has shown that heavier trucks do not necessarily equate to less trucks on the road. A 2010 study from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)[5] found that "the diversion of traffic from rail to truck could potentially add 6-12 million truck trips and 3-5 billion truck-miles to the nation's highways. Although some of the existing truck traffic could be handled in fewer trucks, such benefits would be offset by the added traffic resulting from rail diversion".

This study also concluded that if weight limits were increased from 80,000 to 90,000 lbs., it would have a large effect on rail traffic, reducing it by 10-15%, and that it could potentially result in the diversion of more than a third of the general merchandise traffic currently carried by the railroad industry. This would hit the short line railroads especially hard, as they make their living on connecting small carload trains – trains that could most easily be replaced by a heavier truck.

During the first stakeholder meeting, a representative from Smithfield Foods stated that the reduced carbon footprint by allowing heavier trucks would be beneficial. However, shipping by rail already offers an enormously reduced carbon footprint. According to Virginia's 2017

[5] See *Estimating the Competitive Effect of Larger Trucks on Rail Freight Traffic*, October 26, 2010 Final Report

Statewide Rail Plan, on average, railroads are four times more fuel efficient than trucks and moving freight by rail instead of trucks generates 75% less greenhouse gas emissions. It would be hard to imagine a handful of industries utilizing heavier trucks that could produce such a reduction in harmful carbon emissions.

Understanding the long-term effects on all industries involved would need to be a component of evaluating any pilot program.

Conclusion

Virginia is fortunate to have the vast multimodal transportation assets that it does – the Port of Virginia, an interstate highway system that we are constantly improving, and a strong rail network – all of which help connect industries here to customers around the world.

Before we enter into any federal pilot, at the very least we must know what we are getting into, and what impact it will have on all affected stakeholders. There is a significant amount of data available that highlight some of the concerns with increasing truck weights – the potential for more (and more severe) accidents, the potential detrimental impact on roads and bridges, the added demands for more construction and maintenance dollars for our roads and the negative business impact upon the railroad industry.

While more data are needed, we believe Virginia makes a poor test case state for further evaluation. We have some of the most congested interstates in the country. We are still working through many of these congestion problems, and in the case of I-81, we are still assessing how to best address its unique problems, many of which relate to heavy truck traffic. Additionally, if states contiguous to Virginia such as Maryland and North Carolina do not participate in a pilot program, the study may not be terribly effective anyway.

Proponents of heavier trucks mentioned during the first stakeholder meeting other states that allow for heavier trucks. States with less congested interstates and more open roads make for a much better laboratory to collect data on the safety of these trucks.

Sincerely,

Cannon Moss
President, Virginia Railroad Association
President, Norfolk & Portsmouth Belt Line Railroad Company

CITY OF WAYNESBORO **POLICE DEPARTMENT**
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August 9, 2018

Keith R. Wandtke
Senior Policy Analyst
Governance and Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation

Dear Mr. Wandtke,

I just became aware that VDOT is studying the potential of participating in a 91,000- pound pilot project to allow heavier trucks on Virginia roadways. While I am not advocating for a roll-back of any current weight limits, I firmly believe that any increase in tractor-trailer weight could bring new dangers to Virginia roadways.

If you have ever traveled I-64 across Afton Mountain here in Waynesboro, you are well aware of the amount of tractor-trailer traffic we experience daily on this roadway. Tractor-trailers frequently struggle to maintain a safe speed as they climb Afton Mountain. This causes other drivers to decrease their speed at a very fast pace which can cause a traffic crash. Additionally, the increased weight limits that are being proposed as a part of this pilot program are likely to have a negative effect on the truck's equipment. The brakes, suspension and tires will likely wear out much faster, which can also lead to an increased number of traffic crashes.

Volunteering our motorists to participate in this dangerous pilot project exposes them to further risks on Virginia roadways. As a first responder and Chief of Police, I ask that VDOT take these comments from a law enforcement perspective into account and recommend against the 91,000 pound truck pilot project for Virginia.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Wilhelm
Chief of Police
Waynesboro Police Department

Virginia Cattlemens Association

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Affiliated with The National Cattlemen's Beef Association

August 8, 2018

Mr. Keith Wandtke
Senior Policy Analyst
Governance & Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation

Dear Mr. Wandtke,

The Virginia Cattlemen's Association appreciates the opportunity to comment as part of the working group to consider Virginia's participation in a federal pilot program increasing interstate commercial truck gross weight limits from 80,000 to 91,000 pounds. The Virginia beef cattle sector contributes $8 billion annually to the Commonwealth's $91 billion agriculture and forestry industry economy and the shipping of live cattle through commercial truck carrier utilizing the interstate road system is vital in trade. Virginia ranks among the top 50% of US cattle producing states, having some 1.6 million head of cattle, and ships nearly 800,000 head annually outside of the state to feeding destinations around the country. Approximately 70% of exported Virginia cattle go to markets in the eastern Corn Belt region and the Great Lakes areas where these animals are grown to an end point for harvest and the red meat products are either exported overseas or returned to domestic US consumer wholesale/retail markets. Therefore our industry's collective interest in raising interstate commercial carrier weights extends both to the live cattle and beef product aspects of the business.

Unquestionably since the last update of commercial interstate truck weight limits in 1982, by the US Department of Transportation, commercial truck traffic both on interstate and intrastate highways and roads has increased. The advancements in truck technology and the increasing demands of commerce have facilitated congestion on both as the volume of goods as well as concern over gross weights above 80,000 pounds. These have largely forced a rethinking of shipping logistics. The Virginia Cattlemen's Association advocates for a uniform interstate gross vehicle weight limit and we therefore support increasing commercial carrier weight limits to 91,000 pounds with inclusion of a sixth axle. Recognizing the drastically improved efficiencies and safety available in the trucking industry in 2018 compared to 1982, our members feel this increased weight opportunity would incorporate these advances that are not being utilized currently to improve efficiency. Beef cattle are currently shipped in 50,000 pound load lots ranging from approximately 50 to 100 head depending on average individual animal weight. An increased gross vehicle weight limit to 91,000 pounds could reduce trucks hauling cattle on Virginia highways by as much as 20% and better accommodate our tangent concern over decreasing availability of cattle haulers.

Safety for all drivers using our interstate system as well as the safety and well-being of our cattle being transported are our primary concerns. There are many studies of commercial truck performance with the addition of a sixth axle and increased weight. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was passed by Congress and signed by President Obama in the summer of 2012. One of the act's provisions required a comprehensive truck size and weight limits study to be completed by the United States Department of Transportation. In Michigan, Washington, and Idaho, where six-axle alternative truck configurations are allowed and data was available, the study found that "the crash involvement rate for the six-axle alternative truck configurations is consistently higher than the rate for the five-axle control truck." However, more meaningful to the discussion is the analysis of vehicle stability and control – an important consideration in crash analysis and an independent variable of external factors such as other highway traffic that often causes incidents. These stability and control tests examined "low speed off-tracking, high-speed off-tracking, straight line stopping distance, brake in a curve, and avoidance maneuver."

The findings of the maneuver simulations indicated that all the heavier single trailer configurations "did not differ appreciably from those of the five-axle control vehicle" (at 80,000 pounds). The results included the following statements:

- None of the maneuvers identified a condition where the stability of a single-semitrailer combination was severely impaired by the addition of payload weight or a third trailer axle.
- Adding weight to the payload increased the stopping distance on dry road by less than 10 percent; in the proportions selected for the study, the additional brakes on the third trailer axle compensated for the additional payload in Scenario 2 (6-axle combination with 53 foot semitrailer and a gross weight of 91,000 pounds).
- Simulating a complete right-side brake failure on both drive axles increased the stopping distance, and the effect of that failure on the scenarios was similar to its effect on the control vehicle.

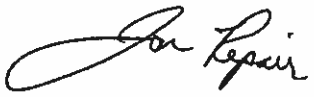
Concern for costs detrimental to the public interests also resonate in the areas of pavement wear, overall truck size and truck energy use. USDOT studies commissioned in various regions of the country addressed these concerns also and have empirically and overwhelming concluded that the addition of a sixth axle improves weight distribution and improves pavement wear. The addition of a sixth axle does not change current truck dimension configuration or footprint for the 80,000 pound limits we currently allow. Finally the addition of a sixth axle has no bearing on fuel efficiency. Modern road tractors are technologically "miles ahead" of the state of the art three decades ago and fuel efficiency along with emissions have improved while increasing torque output, handling ability and braking efficiency.

Finally livestock haulers have a proven safety record supported by the Federal Motor Safety Carrier Administration and National Highway Safety Institute. There are more than 66,000 livestock haulers on the road and for example in 2015, of 1123 commercial truck haulers involved in accidents studied for cause and effect, only 5 involved haulers of livestock. Livestock haulers are specially trained and unique in the industry given the additional implications of animal safety and welfare to be considered along

with humans sharing the highways. The beef cattle industry takes great pride and spends considerable resources to train these drivers and maintain excellent operator safety records.

The Virginia Cattlemen's Association looks forward to continued dialogue and discussion among the members of the working group and consequently the Virginia General Assembly for potential participation in this federal pilot program to increase interstate freight weight limits. Currently nearly all of the Virginia beef cattle industry marketing states of our feeder cattle recognize 91,000 pound and higher intestate hauling limits for agricultural products. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have further questions and we look forward to the future conversations.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Repair – President, Virginia Cattlemen's Association

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JOHN D. JENKINS
Neabsco District

August 10, 2018

Keith R. Wandtke
Senior Policy Analyst
Governance and Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation

Re: Opposition to a 91,000-pound truck pilot project

Dear Mr. Wandtke,

I began serving on the Board of County Supervisors in 1982 as the representative for the Neabsco District and I am the longest serving incumbent on the Board. I have seen a tremendous amount of growth in the Northern Virginia area, but with that growth has also come greater congestion on I-95 leading to more accidents and more road and bridge damage.

I-95 in Northern Virginia is already one of the nation's most congested corridors, and forecasts predict it will only get worse. Prince William County is the location of one of the D.C. region's biggest bottlenecks, where traffic is squeezed from four lanes down to three lanes on Interstate 95 south after the bridge and over the Occoquan River by the Route 123 interchange. This particular area of I-95 is a real problem when you consider that it's the main corridor up and down the east coast.

Allowing heavier trucks to travel in these congested areas would pose an unacceptable increased safety risk to commuters. As taxpayers, I and the residents of our county, pay for infrastructure and if heavier trucks are allowed, it will cost us even more. Where are those funds to come from? Prince William County does not have the resources to repair the extra damage that 91,000 pound trucks will cause.

Since Congress has continuously rejected heavier trucks over the past years, it is unclear to me why anyone would approve allowing heavier trucks in Virginia especially in one of the most densely populated areas in the country. It would be unwise to initiate any such pilot program and unnecessarily expose motorists and our already crumbling infrastructure to these heavier trucks at a time when the USDOT has recommended against any such increase.

Sincerely,

JOHN D. JENKINS
Neabsco District Supervisor

CABT
Coalition Against Bigger Trucks

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Comments Submitted by the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks in Regard to Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly Review of Enrollment in Federal Pilot Program/Project

August 9, 2018

We appreciate the Virginia Department of Transportation's ongoing efforts to seek public input regarding its assessment of a federal pilot program/project to allow heavier trucks on Virginia roadways.

Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT)

Based in Alexandria, Virginia, CABT is a nonprofit grassroots organization with coalitions of approximately 3,000 local supporters in over 30 states, including Virginia. CABT supporters include law enforcement officers, local elected officials, truck drivers, motorists and safety advocates.

CABT Opposition to Heavier-Truck Pilot Program

To be clear, there is no heavier-truck federal pilot program that Virginia or any state could be part of today. These same interests pressing Virginia lawmakers to approve a heavier-truck pilot program have been lobbying Congress unsuccessfully to adopt such a program since 2017. As recently as May 26, 2017, members of a business coalition called "SHIP" wrote to Congress asking it to approve a national pilot program for heavier trucks (letter attached). Congress has taken no action on their proposal. In fact, in 2015 Congress voted down a proposal to raise truck weights from 80,000 to 91,000 pounds.[1]

"Pilot programs" for heavier trucks are unworkable because of the uncertainty of their safety and infrastructure outcomes. These so-called "pilot programs" amount to little more than experimenting with heavier trucks on public roads and bridges with other motorists. The information they seek is the number of crashes, injuries and fatalities caused by heavier trucks, and the damage caused to bridges over which they would run. Better ways of obtaining this information without further endangering motorists or damaging our infrastructure is detailed below.

[1] On Nov. 3, 2015, an amendment offered by Rep. Reid Ribble (R-Wis.) to the Transportation Reauthorization Act was defeated on a bipartisan vote, 236 to 187.

The fact is that 91,000-pound trucks and other heavier trucks operate elsewhere in the country today, including Virginia, and the USDOT is developing a research plan to collect more data on these heavier-truck operations. It would be a reckless shortcut to initiate a pilot program on these trucks in Virginia in order to study an incredibly limited set of new characteristics when the vast majority of these characteristics are already available for analysis under current heavier-truck operations already in existence in the country.

CABT Opposition to Heavier Trucks

CABT is opposed to heavier trucks because they are more dangerous, damage infrastructure, and cost taxpayers money. In fact, Congress has consistently rejected both heavier and longer truck proposals because of concerns for public safety and infrastructure damage.

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued a report recommending against any increases in the weight of trucks because there is simply not enough reliable data on which to base any changes in truck size and weight.[2] That report did find, however, that heavier trucks had serious safety problems and would impose additional costs to our highway infrastructure—and concluded with a series of recommendations for collecting more reliable data.

- Higher crash rates: USDOT found in its 2016 report to Congress that heavier trucks had anywhere from 47 percent to 400 percent higher crash rates in limited state testing.[3]

- More severe crashes: The severity of a crash is determined by the velocity and mass of a vehicle. If its weight increases, so does the potential severity of a crash.[4] Any increase in crash severity increases the likelihood of injuries becoming more serious, or resulting in fatalities.

- Increased rollover propensity: Heavier trucks tend to have a higher center of gravity because the additional weight is oftentimes stacked vertically. Raising the center of gravity increases the risk of rollovers.[5]

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[2] USDOT; 2016. *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, Final Report to Congress*
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] USDOT; 2000. *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study*

- Increased wear and tear: Increasing the weight of trucks causes additional wear and tear on key safety components. The 2016 USDOT study found that trucks weighing over 80,000 pounds had higher overall out-of-service (OOS) rates and 18 percent higher brake violation rates compared to those at or below 80,000 pounds.[6] This is especially important because a 2016 study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that trucks with any out-of-service violation are 362 percent more likely to be involved in a crash.[7]

Heavier Trucks Would Cause Significant Infrastructure Damage to Virginia Roads and Bridges

Forty-nine percent of Virginia's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition. Driving on roads in need of repair costs Virginia motorists $3.2 billion a year in extra vehicle repairs and operating costs, or $556 per motorist. Adding even heavier trucks would only make this worse.

Of the 13,892 bridges in Virginia, 65 percent are either in poor or fair condition. Many of these bridges could not accommodate these heavier trucks. These bridges would need to be reinforced or replaced, costing Virginia taxpayers millions of dollars.

Heavier Trucks Would Threaten Local Virginia Communities

Approving Virginia participation in a heavier truck pilot program would mean more dangerous and damaging trucks running on local roads through Virginia towns and communities where people live and work.

Proponents of heavier and longer trucks would have you believe these trucks would only run on Interstates and other major highways, and would not operate on rural roads. Heavier trucks would find their way onto state and local roads, since no truck loads or unloads freight on an Interstate, meaning these trucks would spill over into rural communities.

And when these trucks run on local roads, their impact would be greater because these roads are more vulnerable to the impacts of the bigger trucks:

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[6] USDOT; 2016. *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, Final Report to Congress*

[7] Insurance Institute for Highway Safety; 2016. *Crash Risk Factors for Interstate Large Trucks in North Carolina*

- Roads and bridges off the NHS are older and in worse shape than NHS routes—36 percent of bridges off of the NHS are over 50 years old while only 14 percent of Interstate bridges are that old.

- Nationwide, 66 percent of the bridges classified as "structurally deficient" are owned by the local cities and towns, not the federal government or states.

- Rural roads are the most dangerous—they are more likely than NHS routes to have roadway features that reduce safety, such as narrow lanes, limited shoulders, sharp curves and steep slopes. Rural roads have a traffic fatality rate that is nearly 300 percent higher than all other roads.[8]

Rural roads and bridges cannot be an afterthought to the debate of allowing heavier trucks on U.S. highways because of the costs to highway safety and infrastructure:

- The majority of automobile traffic, 56 percent, is on local roads.

- Rural roads and bridges are at the intersection of significant large-truck activity and where constituents live and work.

- Bigger trucks would impose an additional tax burden triggered by further damage to roads that will shift the responsibility to states and localities without any federal source for cost recovery.

Data Collection Recommendations Instead of "Pilot Programs"

Improving the collection of crash and travel data in the states where heavier trucks already operate is the logical next step as opposed to expanding the operation of more dangerous trucks.

CABT suggests that VDOT offer specific recommendations instead of a pilot program that include the following:

- Reinstitute the collection of higher-quality, impartial data nationwide (i.e., TIFA and VIUS), including vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and implement a uniform crash report form that accurately collects information as to the number of axles, truck weight, and road type where the crash occurred.

[8] The Road Information Program, 2015. *Rural Connections: Challenges and Opportunities in America's Heartland.*

- Collect and analyze data on the impacts of heavier-truck operations on local roads and bridges.
- Conduct off-road operational tests of heavier-truck configurations, fully evaluating vehicle dynamics in real-world conditions.

Previous Studies

We encourage VDOT to review the following studies and analyses on heavier trucks:

U.S. Department of Transportation; 2016. *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, Final Report to Congress*

- Full report

U.S. Department of Transportation; 2015. *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, Volume 1: Technical Reports Summary*

- Full summary

U.S. Department of Transportation; 2015. *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis Technical Report*

- Full safety technical report

U.S. Department of Transportation; 2013. *Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis, Final Draft Desk Scan*

- Full report
- CABT summary attached

Multimodal Transportation and Infrastructure Consortium; 2013. *An Analysis of Truck Size and Weight: Phase I – Safety*, as revised September 29, 2014, Matthews Memorandum

- Study summary
- Full study
- Memorandum

May 26, 2017

The Honorable
Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable
Ranking Member Nita Lowey
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable
Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development
2358-A Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable
Ranking Member David Price
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development
2358-A Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Gross Vehicle Weight limit pilot safety study in FY 2018 appropriations

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Members of the Committee,

As leaders in manufacturing, agribusiness, and other industries that sustain millions of American jobs, we support inclusion in FY 2018 appropriations legislation of a limited pilot project to advance safety and infrastructure protection. The current Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) limit for Federal Interstate Highways of 80,000 lbs on 5 axles was established in 1982, prior to the standardization of anti-lock brakes on Class-8 tractors. While significant progress has been made in vehicle safety and pavement technology, it has been 35 years since the US updated GVW limits on Federal Interstate Highways. Yet, states are seeking greater flexibility for GVW limits on most roads. Currently due to exceptions in the law, 31 US states allow trucks over 80,000 pounds on Federal Interstate Highways under special permits, categorical exemptions, or on designated corridors. Furthermore, 18 states currently allow trucks at GVW greater than 80,000 lbs on non-Interstate highways as a matter of right, and all 50 states allow trucks to haul at GVW greater than 80,000 lbs on state roads under special permits, categorical exemptions, or on designated corridors.

While states have rightfully updated GVW limits to better suit their individual needs, this often means trucks hauling more than 80,000 lbs are using less ideal infrastructure thus traveling on more local roads past schools, churches, and playgrounds where pedestrians are often present. Congress should seek information to know if there are more safe, more sustainable, and more productive ways to modernize the current limit of 80,000 lbs on Federal Interstate Highways and give the states flexibility to move those loads on the safer Interstates and away from roads with pedestrians.

The government research has identified a lack of adequate data and research regarding safety implications, or benefits, of modernizing GVW limits. The *2016 US Department of*

Transportation, Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limit Study (CTSWLS), Report to Congress concluded that Congressional changes in GVW limits were a matter of policy and more data and evidence would enable DOT to provide Congress with better guidance. The report specifically referenced the lack of information on the number of vehicle axles and actual loaded weight at the time of a crash. The report cited a study from 2002 that said, "the difficulty in studying actual truck weight in crash-based analyses was (previously) noted in a Transportation Research Board study."

However, the *2016 CTSWLS* included information indicating that a 91,000 lb, 6-axle GVW limit for Federal Interstate Highways could help address several of our nation's long term infrastructure challenges, including but not limited to: safety, infrastructure maintenance costs, greenhouse gas emissions, congestion, competitiveness and productivity. Specifically, the report found that the 91,000 lb, 6-axle configuration, when implemented on Federal Interstate Highways in all 50 states, would result in:

- one foot reduction in stopping distance during braking tests when compared to the current 80,000 lb, 5-axle configuration
- 2.4 – 4.2% reduction in life-cycle pavement costs for Federal Interstate and NHS Highways
- 0.4% reduction in annual program enforcement costs
- 1.2 billion mile reduction in annual Vehicle Miles Traveled on US roads
- $358 million reduction in annual congestion costs
- 109 million gallon reduction in annual fuel consumption
- 2.4 billion pound reduction in annual carbon dioxide emissions
- $5.6 billion reduction in annual logistics costs for American businesses

Given the potential benefits of modernizing the baseline GVW limit on Federal Interstate Highways to a 91,000 lb, 6-axle, bridge formula compliant configuration, we believe Congress should create an opportunity for policy makers and DOT to obtain information they need to determine if there is a correlation between GVW and serious accidents.

We respectfully encourage the committee to include language in the FY 2018 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development appropriations bill to create a voluntary program under which 10 states could opt-in to allowing 91,000 lb, 6-axle, bridge formula compliant trucks on Federal Interstate Highways within their borders, and collect additional safety data regarding the GVW and axle configurations of commercial trucks involved in serious accidents. To enable carriers to recoup the investment of an additional axle, this pilot should be for 15 years, which is the average life span of a commercial trailer. Such a pilot, similar to others included in previous appropriations bills, will provide critical information currently lacking but necessary to determine if significant benefits affiliated with this configuration can be realized in a way to preserve or enhance the safety our nation's roads.

We thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request and your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Agriculture & Commodities Transportation Association
Alabama Cattlemen's Association
Alabama Poultry and Egg Association
American Beverage Association
American Chemistry Council
American Forest and Paper Association
American Frozen Food Institute
American Malting Barley Association
American Soybean Association
Anheuser-Busch Companies
Arizona Cattle Feeders Association
Arizona Cattle Growers Association
Arkansas Cattlemen's Association
Beer Institute
Border Valley Trading
Campbell Soup
Cargill
Colorado Cattlemen's Association
Colorado Livestock Association
Dairy Farmers of America
Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.
Florida Cattlemen's Association
Georgia Cattlemen's Association
Georgia Poultry Federation
Glass Packaging Institute
Graphic Packaging
Grocery Manufacturers of America
International Paper
Iowa Cattlemen's Association
Kansas Livestock Association
Kentucky Poultry Federation
Land O'Lakes
Leprino Foods
Michigan Cattlemen's Association
MillerCoors
Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association
Mississippi Cattlemen's Association
Missouri Cattlemen's Association
National Association of Chemical Distributors
National Barley Growers Association
National Beef Packing Company, LLC
National Carriers, Inc.
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation

National Pork Producers Council
National Turkey Federation
Nebraska Cattlemen's Association
North American Meat Institute
North Carolina Poultry Federation
North Dakota Stockmen's Association
Ohio Cattlemen's Association
Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association
Oldcastle Materials
Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Owens-Illinois
Pacific Northwest Asia Shippers Association
Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association
PepsiCo, Inc.
Smithfield Foods
Solvay
South Carolina Cattlemen's Association
South Dakota Cattlemen's Association
Soybean Transportation Board
Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association
Texas Cattle Feeders Association
Texas Poultry Federation
The Coca-Cola Company
The Fertilizer Institute
The Poultry Federation (AR, MO, OK)
Tyson Foods, Inc.
U.S. Forage Export Council
U.S. Premium Beef, LLC
United Aluminum Corporation
United Fresh Produce Association
US Poultry and Egg Association
Utah Cattlemen's Association
Virginia Cattlemen's Association
Virginia Poultry Federation
Washington Cattle Feeders Association
Washington State Potato Commission
WestRock
Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association
Wyoming Stock Growers Association

USDOT Study 'Desk Scan' Confirms Dangers of Bigger Trucks

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) MAP-21 Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study is not scheduled to be completed until November. However, DOT's review of 30 years of past truck size and weight studies shows significant concerns about the safety of bigger trucks. Excerpts from the DOT Desk Scan[1] are below.

Crash Rates Rise with Increased Truck Weight

- "**Gross vehicle weight would appear to be associated with higher crash rates** based on changes in vehicle operating characteristics and limited crash studies. However, crash studies are greatly hindered by the lack of weight data on state crash reports." (DOT findings, pg. 46)

- "Crash rates tend to increase with increases in GVW." (UMTRI summary, pg. 46)

- "The study also noted an increase in fatal crash rates at higher GVWs. Because of data limitations, only gross weights up to 80,000 lb were considered; the adjusted rate for the 65-80,000 lb GCW group was about 40% higher than the 50-65,000 lb GCW group. This implies that van tractor-semitrailers loaded to 65-80,000 lb would have a 1.42 times higher rate than all tractor-semitrailers if they had the same distribution of travel." (Campbell summary, pg. 13)

Operating Characteristics of Bigger Trucks Are Associated with Safety Risks

- "Older crash rates studies have shown that **roll threshold, rearward amplification, load transfer ratio, braking efficiency, and steering sensitivity are associated with changes in crash risk.** Low-speed and high-speed offtracking have not yet been shown to be associated with crash risk." (DOT findings, pg. 46)

- "Rollover threshold, defined as the maximum level of lateral acceleration a truck can achieve without rolling over, decreases as GVW (gross vehicle weight) increases. Crash analysis shows that the probability of rollover increases for combination trucks as the GVW increases." (TRB summary, pg. 8)

- "Rearward amplification is the tendency of trailers to over-respond to rapid steering maneuvers. Simulation and modeling shows that rearward amplification increases with the number of articulation points; shorter trailer wheelbases; higher GVW; higher center of gravity; and lower tire cornering stiffness." (TRB summary, pg. 8)

- "Steering sensitivity is a measure of how well a vehicle responds to steering inputs ... The study reported that increases in GVW reduce sensitivity, and lower sensitivity is associated with higher rates of single-vehicle crashes." (TRB summary, pg. 8)

- "The operational effect of higher GVWs and greater lengths include slower speeds on upgrades, increased time/distance to get up to speed on merges, more conflicts in lane changes, increased risk of runaways on downgrades, and conflicts at intersections related to sight distance because of increased time to clear an intersection and accelerate up to speed." (TRB summary, pg. 8)

- "They found that as impeding vehicle length increases, odds of failure to pass increase. Odds of failing to pass a 120-foot long LCV are 2-6 times a 65-foot long truck." (Hanley and Forkenbrock summary, pg. 14)

- "In passing maneuvers, LCVs take longer to pass on two-lane roads, which may make passing unsafe or impossible on roads with relatively high traffic volume." (Harkey summary, pg. 10)

[1] *USDOT Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis, Final Draft Desk Scan, November 2013*

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Virginia Department of Transportation
Review of Enrollment in Federal Pilot Program/Project
8/10/2018

Please find below our responses to the questions posed to the Stakeholder Working Group:

From your organization's perspective, what would you propose (and why) in response to the specific issues or implications to be considered by VDOT in determining whether or not to participate in a federal pilot authorizing six axle vehicles weighing 91,000 lbs. to operate on the interstates…

The fee structure for qualifying tractor trucks:

While we project there will be no additional expense associated with maintaining pavement, our recommendation would be to issue annual permits for individual tractors at a rate commensurate with the additional costs to manage the program.

The axle spacing for qualifying tractor trucks:

We support the requirement of a sixth axle to support 91,000lbs and the axle spacing should be designed to most effectively distribute the weight of the load and to comply with the federal bridge formula.

From the U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration: "Compliance with the Bridge Formula weight limits is determined by using the following formula: This Bridge Formula states the maximum allowable weight equals the length between axles multiplied by the number of axles divided by the number of axles minus 1 plus the number of axles multiplied by 12 plus 36; then multiply this product by 500."

Issues related to reasonable access from loading facilities onto a primary or secondary highway and interstate highways, the sufficiency of existing data in determining if certain routes and bridges should be excluded from the federal pilot program or project, and any other issues that should be considered by the Department:

If states and municipalities do not follow suit when the max gross vehicle weight increase on federal highways, we recommend allowing the states and municipalities to require approval for individual routes. Currently, in states that have been grandfathered in to having higher weights on interstates, we are required to get permission and in some instances acquire local permits to ship at increased weights in certain municipalities. Any bridges or routes that already have max weights below 80,000 should be excluded.

From your perspective, what are the advantages (positive impacts)/disadvantages (negative impacts) of increasing the maximum allowable load to 91,000 pounds? What information/data is available to support or quantify said advantages/disadvantages (impacts)?

1. Reduced stress on infrastructure: 91,000 lbs. on 6 axles is less weight per axle and provides a more balanced distribution of weight, and therefore reduces the impact on infrastructure. The DOT's COMPREHENSIVE TRUCK SIZE AND WEIGHTS STUDY claims a 2.4%-4.2% reduction in life-

cycle pavement costs. The Minnesota Department of Transportation found that the addition of a sixth axle created a 37% reduction in road wear and an overall reduction in the number of trips needed to transport products. The Technical Report of the CTSWL study shows that the bridge formula compliant 91,000-pound, six-axle configuration would result in zero additional one- time bridge rehabilitation costs compared to the configuration meeting current GVW limits.

2. Improved Safety: The DOT's Comprehensive Truck Size and Weights Study found the six axle configuration brakes over one foot sooner than the five axle configuration with no impact to maneuverability. The increased payload will also lead to fewer trucks on the road, reducing total miles driven and accident exposure for shippers that weigh out by up to 16%. Additionally, state laws already allow for trucks over 80,000lbs on state roads in some circumstances without a sixth axle. This will put the heavier trucks that are already in place on to the interstate highway system where they belong, rather than on local roads. In summary; this solution is a safer configuration for an individual truck, will reduce the number of trucks actually on the roads, and shift the trucks currently taking local roads onto the better equipped highway system.

3. Reduced Emissions: Higher payloads will mean fewer loads on trucks, fewer miles on trucks, less fuel burned and ultimately fewer carbon emissions. Most of the world recognizes climate change caused by carbon emissions as a threat with catastrophic consequences and increasing weights would be a step in preventing it.

4. Savings for the consumer: The Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study estimates a $5.6 billion dollar reduction in freight costs. Continuously increasing freight costs due in large part to the growing driver shortage impacts the prices that consumers pay for everyday items, such as cereal and peanut butter. From Reuters; "The drive for cost cuts and higher margins at U.S. trucking and railroad operators is pinching their biggest customers, forcing the likes of General Mills Inc. (GIS.N) and Hormel Foods Corp (HRL.N) to spend more on deliveries and consider raising their own prices as a way to pass along the costs."

5. Benefits to truck drivers: Drivers and carriers that make the voluntary business decision to invest in their equipment and add a sixth axle will be able to command a premium from shippers looking to haul their freight at the 91,000lb limit. Shippers that weigh out their loads make their freight tendering decisions based off of $/pound, and will be willing to pay more per mile to capture the ~16% increase in payload. This will increase the wages earned and quality of life for these drivers and help to make truck driving a more attractive profession.

6. Benefits to industry: Many large industrial manufacturers and agribusiness companies that ship their products/materials via trucks "weigh-out" before they "load-out" forcing half-empty trucks to be deployed, driving up cost and inefficiency. The current 80,000 pound weight limit has been in effect since 1982 despite significant advancements in truck safety and design as well as pavement technology. Both Canada and Mexico currently allow for shipping weights at or above 91,000lbs, and manufacturers make production sourcing decisions targeting the lowest total cost to get their goods to the consumer. This is a competitive disadvantage for the United States and the gap is only widening as the cost of transportation due to the increasing

shortage of drivers in the US. Even within the country, in the scope of the pilot, states that participate and allow for shipments at 91,000lbs will have a significant advantage over states that do not opt-in. Anheuser-Busch ships over 1 million truckloads annually, more than 50,000 of which are shipped outbound from our brewery in Williamsburg and distribution center in Colonial Heights. We will have a clear incentive to brew and ship in states where we are able to be more productive and ship at a higher payload.

What actions would be needed to mitigate any potential negative impacts? What other changes would be required (enforcement, permitting, inspection, infrastructure design/maintenance, etc.?)

Requiring permits for individual trucks and monitoring evaluation criteria on a routine basis should mitigate potential negative impacts and allow early identification of the issue. Should negative impacts be identified, an investigation should be conducted to understand the root cause followed by appropriate corrective actions.

How should any potential pilot be evaluated? What criteria should be considered and what data will be required?

There will need to be clearly defined metrics that should be monitored. We believe the list of metrics generated in the VADOT stakeholder meeting held on 7/27 to be sufficient. For safety, measuring the accidents / million miles as well as miles avoided (fewer trucks due to higher payload) is critical. Monitoring infrastructure wear and tear, and also collecting data pertaining to modal shifts from shippers is important as well. Emissions impacts should also be calculated including miles avoided due to higher payload and, if applicable, modal shifts.

What steps should be taken to ensure safety, mobility, and state of good repair are maintained during a pilot project?

The evaluation criteria listed above should be monitored and if there is a statistically significant indication of reduction in safety or increased road damage in a given stretch of highway it should trigger a deeper investigation to ensure that appropriate corrective actions are taken. The Commissioner of Highways should be empowered to withdraw from the federal pilot at any point if preliminary data demonstrates harm to public safety and/or infrastructure and to impose permit fees for trucks that voluntarily opt to haul the enhanced weight trucks.

Other concerns/considerations?

The concern of potentially significant modal shifts from truck to rail were raised during the VADOT stakeholder meeting. Regarding that point, the Modal Shift Comparative Analysis Technical Report from the Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study found that enabling 91,000lbs on a sixth axle would only reduce rail revenues by 1.1% ($196 Million). This same configuration would also reduce total logistics costs by $5.6 Billion. Additionally, this methodology cannot fully take into account pricing decisions and competitive reactions. The rail industry maintains significantly more favorable operating ratios than trucking; with Union Pacific reporting 62.8% in 2017 and CSX most recently reporting 58.6%. The average operating ratio for trucking companies is 95.2%, meaning for every dollar spent they profit 4.8 cents. With all of this in mind, we believe the potential modal shift from 91,000 on six axles to be essentially negligible. The purpose of the pilot is to determine whether or not enabling this configuration

will be better for society (or the state) as a whole and should not be influenced by competition across industries.

Over 30 states currently allow trucks weighing over the 80,000-pound federal limit on portions of or all of their Interstate Highways via a grandfather clause or special exemptions. All 50 states allow trucks carrying more than 80,000 lbs. to drive on local roads—past schools, homes, and playgrounds. Trucks travel the country on these local routes, creating safety issues, contributing to traffic and congestion, burning more fuel and generating more greenhouse gases.

* The 2016 US Department of Transportation, Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limit Study (CTSWLS), Report to Congress concluded that Congressional changes in GVW limits were a matter of policy and more data and evidence would enable DOT to provide Congress with better guidance.

Sincerely,

Matt Gordon

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Anheuser-Busch

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A unifying voice for Virginia's forestry community

August 10, 2018

Mr. Keith Wandtke
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Review of Chapters 553/554 and Draft Federal Pilot Program Legislation

Dear Mr. Wandtke,

The Virginia Forestry Association (VFA) is offering comments to the Virginia Department of Transportation regarding the review of Chapters 553/554 Acts of Assembly, potential enrollment in a federal pilot program authorizing six-axle vehicles weighing 91,000 lbs. to operate on interstates in the Virginia. VFA supports the Commonwealth's participation in a pilot program to voluntarily increase the allowable weight from its current 80,000 lbs. to 91,000 lbs.

VFA represents Virginia's diverse forestry community and promotes the sustainable use and conservation of forest resources to ensure their long term social benefits for all Virginians. Our 1200 members include a vast array of forest product businesses, woodland owners, and forestry professionals. We believe that conservation and sustainable use of forest resources drive ecological, economic, and social prosperity in Virginia.

In fact, consumer demand for sustainably-sourced products is great and because forests in Virginia are managed sustainably, our forest industry benefits from available markets. The outlook is bright for our sector that ranks as the third leading industry in the Commonwealth, providing an overall economic output of more than $21 billion annually, employing more than 108,000 Virginians, and paying forest landowners more than $339 million each year for their standing trees.

However, our future business success and vital industry economic contribution will depend on accessible, convenient, safe, and highly efficient modes of transporting raw material from the woods and manufactured products to all points of Virginia, the East Coast, and beyond through our ports. A viable and more productive federal interstate system is critical to our success. This includes the need to haul more weight on our trucks. We sincerely believe that six-axle vehicles may be an answer. It is imperative that we research this possibility.

Specifically, our larger industrial manufacturers that ship products by truck often reach their weight limit before their volume limit, a highly inefficient and costly way of doing business.

This situation can impact many smaller, family-owned wood product businesses as well. Many states have changed their laws and regulations, including Virginia, to allow the transport of heavier loads on interstate highways as well as on local and state roads by right and by permit. All states allow trucks to haul more on local roads, creating community safety issues and more local traffic and congestion. Fuel is wasted and air quality impacted more than necessary. The existing 80,000 lbs. weight limit has been the law in Virginia since 1982. Since then, safety measures have been modernized significantly and highway construction technology improved.

There is potential through this study to eventually reduce the number of loads being hauled, since more would be allowed on each load, and thereby reducing truck traffic in Virginia. Safety factors to consider are the reduction in stopping distance using a six-axle combination and reduction in pavement wear as outlined in the 2016 US Department of Transportation Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limit Study, Report to Congress.

In summary, it is critical that forest products businesses across the Commonwealth have the opportunity to transport their goods as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible. This potential is now unduly restricted. VFA asks VDOT and the Commonwealth to proceed with plans to participate in a federal study of the 91,000 option on our interstates, and whenever possible to partner with our neighboring states to explore joint participation in such a pilot program.

VFA will continue to look for other research on this issue, and we reserve the right to submit additional comments during the process of this review.

Respectfully,

Paul R. Howe

Paul Russell Howe
Executive Director

COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
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August 9, 2018

Keith R. Wandtke
Senior Policy Analyst
Governance and Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation

Dear Mr. Wandtke,

I am writing as the White Hall District Supervisor of Albemarle County to express my strong opposition to the proposal to test heavier trucks on Virginia roads. For me, this is a matter first of safety. But this is also a matter of preserving our highways, which are already in an alarming state of disrepair.

As you are well aware, most of the rural and some of the urban roads in Central Virginia are crumbling at the edges with potholes the size of saucer sleds, due to the falling gas tax revenues and underfunding of VDOT maintenance programs for a decade. This is compounded by the rapid growth of traffic all over. If Virginia participated in a national pilot project for 91,000-pound, six axle trucks, this would only get worse.

This bigger truck proposal was rejected earlier this year by the Virginia General Assembly and now, a special task force is looking into whether Virginia should participate if Congress passes such legislation.

Two reasons jump out to me immediately as to why this is a bad idea:

It is bad public policy to experiment with the citizens of the Commonwealth to learn if these heavier trucks are more dangerous to other drivers (YES) and destructive to the roadways (YES). . The reason I can say yes is that the Federal Department of Transportation finished a comprehensive study of this issue in 2016 and found that in the states that already allow the heavier trucks they have a higher crash rate than the standard 80,000-pound five-axle truck on the road today. Virginia and our drivers in the Commonwealth should not be the national testing ground for this experiment.

Virginia's infrastructure, especially the bridges, is already in poor repair and cannot stand the additional concentrated weight. The USDOT study found that the added weight on trucks will add over a billion dollars to bridge repairs – and that only accounts for about 20 percent of the bridges on the interstates and does not even take into account local infrastructure. The 2007 Minnesota bridge collapse immediately popped into my mind when I read about this pilot project.

This proposal to allow heavier trucks seems like a solution in search of a problem. I have been travelling to DC to meet legislators for eight years. Congress has refused to approve the proposal that is the subject of this External Stakeholders group. It is disappointing to see Virginia special interests going out of their way to bring this harm to our Commonwealth.

PLEASE do not invite them into Virginia and put our families and our visitors at risk. As a board member on the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), I stand with this association and the National Association of Counties (NACo), asking that you oppose a push for heavier tractor- trailers.

Thank you so much for your service to the Commonwealth and for consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

Ann H Mallek

Ann Mallek
White Hall District Supervisor
Albemarle County

CSX
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August 10, 2018

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Keith Wandtke
Senior Policy Analyst
Governance and Legislative Affairs Office
Virginia Department of Transportation

Mr. Wandtke:

On behalf of CSX Transportation (CSXT), we offer the following comments to the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Stakeholders Working Group on Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the work group and consideration of our comments.

Virginia National Leader in supporting the retention of essential rail options

In 2004, the Commonwealth created the Commission on Rail Enhancement for the 21st Century, which recommended Virginia's Rail Enhancement Fund as a critical part of its plan on how to move freight through the region. In 2005, the General Assembly approved this effort becoming one of the nation's first dedicated sources of state revenue for rail infrastructure improvements. This program in conjunction with private investment helps to maintain a competitive rail network serving the Port of Virginia to achieve maximum truck diversion from Virginia's congested highways. Virginia's support of numerous freight and passenger rail initiatives have specifically targeted congestion on specific roadways, including I-95, I-81, I-64 and numerous other federal highways. While many of those rail projects are nearing completion, it seems to be in conflict with any efforts to divert traffic from rail and to put more trucks on these same roads.

CSXT is an essential component of Virginia's transportation network and economy

In Virginia CSXT owns and maintains approximately 2,000 miles of track, operates four major rail yards, serves the Port of Virginia and two export terminals in Newport News. CSXT safely transports agriculture and forestry products, energy resources, chemicals products, construction materials and everyday household merchandise for Virginia businesses to customers and markets within the state, across the country and around the world. CSXT not only moves the freight that drives Virginia's

economy, but a large majority of the passenger trains in Virginia travels on tracks owned and maintained by CSXT.

In 2017 CSXT invested over $58 million in our Virginia rail network and handled over 1 million carloads of freight in Virginia largely along the I-95, I-64 corridors. According the 2017 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan estimates, this carload volume is equivalent to more than 3.5 million trucks off Virginia roads and highways at minimal cost to taxpayers, no maintenance costs and with no damage to the roads. CSXT can move a ton of freight 474 miles on a single gallon of fuel, which is four times more efficient than trucks,[1] improving air quality and reducing emissions in Virginia. Later this year, CSXT will complete a nearly $1 billion project to double stack clear and remove bottlenecks along our I-95 corridor to improve freight access from the Port of Virginia to Midwest markets.

The CSXT rail network moves Virginia's economy and provides massive public benefits through cleaner emissions, fewer truck miles, decreased congestion, and reduced wear and tear on roads, highways and bridges in Virginia. CSXT is an essential component of Virginia's economic strength and the movement of goods and people throughout the Commonwealth.

As a critical link in the Commonwealth's transportation network, CSXT has serious reservations about Virginia participating in a federal pilot program to test 91,000lb trucks. CSXT relies on a balanced field to be able to compete with other modes of transportation. The taxes and fees heavy trucks pay are already far less than the cost of the damage they cause. This multi-billion dollar underpayment - which is subsidized through taxes and general fund transfers – would become greater and tilt the competitive field further from rail. This program would create unnecessary risk to Virginia's transportation network and motorists, accelerate deterioration of highways, roads and bridges, increase costs to state and local governments and taxpayers, and minimize the transportation, economic and environmental benefits provided to the public by freight rail.

Heavier Trucks will put Virginia's transportation balance at risk

With the growth of the Port of Virginia, a strong rail network of Class I and short line railroads and an improving highway and road system, Virginia has a balanced transportation network that essential to growing our economy.

According to the 2017 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan, 100 freight rail cars carry the same amount of freight as 340 semi-trailer trucks, and shipping by rail provides $312 million annually in congestion savings and $123 million per year in savings to annual pavement maintenance, which equates to roughly 6% of the VDOT's maintenance budget. The 2017 Rail Plan also notes shipping by rail avoids about 1.7 billion miles of truck travel in Virginia. Additionally, 37% of all containers through the Port of Virginia

[1] www.csx.com/index.cfm/responsibility/environment-and-efficiency/

are moved by rail,[2] which is the highest percentage on the East Coast providing the Commonwealth a distinct competitive advantage over Charleston and Savannah.

Despite proponents' claims that heavier trucks will decrease the number of trucks and their negative impacts on infrastructure and safety, research has shown that increasing truck weights would create modal shifts that significantly increase trucks trips and truck miles on interstate highways.

A 2000 USDOT Study found increased truck size and weights would lead to a sharp decline in freight moving by rail.[3] A 2010 study from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) found while some existing truck traffic could be handled in fewer trucks, any benefits would be offset by the added traffic resulting from rail diversion. The MIT study concluded that if weight limits were increased from 80,000 to 90,000lbs, rail traffic would be reduced by 10-15%, while adding 6-12 million truck trips and 3-5 billion truck miles to our highways.[4]

As previously stated, CSXT moved over 1 million carloads in Virginia in 2017, largely along the I-95 and I-64 corridors. If 15% of this rail traffic was diverted to highways, approximately 510,000 more trucks could be added to these already congested interstates - slowing down traffic, adding wear and tear and maintenance costs for roads and bridges and creating four times as much fuel emissions to move this freight. Similar modal shifts could occur around the Port of Virginia, along I-81 and other highways in Virginia.

Unfortunately, heavier trucks would precipitate modal shifts that undermine the public benefits provided by freight rail and place Virginia transportation network at risk.

Position and Recommendations:

While CSXT is in opposition to increasing truck weights on roads, we appreciate the opportunity to participate in the VDOT stakeholders working group and make the following observations.

Pilot Project has continually been rejected by the U.S. Congress

It should be noted that the U.S. Congress has repeatedly opposed efforts to allow heavier trucks on federal highways. This pilot project concept was first introduced in 2015 as an amendment to the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act on the floor of the House where it was soundly defeated on a bipartisan vote, 187-236. Two attempts to get the pilot included in two different appropriation bills were also unsuccessful. Given this committee will therefore only be evaluating a theoretical program, ***it***

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[2] www.portofvirginia.com/about/fast-facts/
[3] USDOT, *CTSWL Study*, 2000
[4] *Estimating the Competitive Effect of Larger Trucks on Freight Rail Traffic,* Final Report, Charles D. Martland, 2010

should not be implied the Commonwealth or this group support any future efforts to encourage Congressional action to include a pilot project in future legislation.

Heavier trucks will put Virginia's roads and bridges at risk

Heavier trucks accelerate deterioration of highways, local roads and bridges and cause higher costs for road maintenance and bridge repair/replacement. According to the 2016 United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study*, 91,000lbs, six-axle trucks would negatively affect more than 4,800 bridges nationwide, including 1,485 on interstate highways, requiring at least $1.1 billion in addition to the $2.4 billion needed for damage already done by trucks at the current weight limit of 80,000 pounds.[5] The Transportation Research Board (TRB) determined increasing the weight of a heavy truck by only 10% increases bridge damage by 33%.[6]

This road and bridge deterioration is a particular concern to Virginia. According to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) 2017 Structurally Deficient Bridge list, 825 bridges in Virginia are structurally deficient, including 136 in the Interstate Highway System.[7] When added to the bridges in the Commonwealth considered functionally obsolete, carrying more weight than they were designed to hold, nearly one of every seven bridges needs repairs or replacement. Introducing heavier trucks to the highway system would accelerate and exacerbate the deterioration of these bridges, putting additional stress on highway maintenance funding.

While heavier trucks would strain our highway system, the impacts could be even greater on state and local roads. Shippers do not load and unload on highways, so the pilot program could open the door for 91,000lb trucks to carry any commodity on any road or across any structure anywhere in the Commonwealth. Heavier trucks will operate extensively on state and local roads and bridges, which are least able to handle these increases, further depleting VDOT's maintenance program and diverting resources from other local funding priorities such as schools and police.

To assess impacts to and structural sufficiency of secondary and local roads and bridges, VDOT should evaluate routing from interstate highways to all existing and planned heavy manufacturing facilities and industrial sites and assess bridge load ratings and road pavement conditions along these routes. VDOT should also map the existing structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges on interstate highways, primary and secondary roads. While proponents of the federal pilot program represent a few of the largest industrial businesses in Virginia, the pilot program would open heavier trucks to any business in Virginia and our infrastructure should be assessed accordingly.

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[5] USDOT, *Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study (CTSWL)*, 2016
[6] TRB, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, *Effect of Truck Weight on Bridge Network Costs*, 2003
[7] FHWA, 2017 Structurally Deficient Bridge List, www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/nbi/no10/defbr17.cfm

Participation in any federal pilot program for heavier trucks should only be considered after a comprehensive assessment of this infrastructure is completed; all construction and administrative costs to Virginia are funded by the federal government or through increased truck permit fees; and appropriate highway, road and bridge repairs and replacements are made. If the pilot were to begin before these bridges are repaired or replaced, then heavier trucks should be required to avoid them all together.

Unfortunately, no version of the proposed federal pilot has including funding to offset the inevitable construction and administrative costs of such a program.

Heavier Trucks will put Virginia motorists at risk

Before the Commonwealth volunteers to test heavier trucks on our highways and roads, we should be certain this will not increase safety risks to Virginia motorists. Unfortunately, available data shows this is not the case.

The 2016 USDOT study found in Washington state that 6-axle, 91,000lb trucks, the same as proposed federal pilot program, had a 47% higher crash rate. The same study found in Idaho and Michigan, 6-axle, 97,000lb trucks, had 99% and 400% higher crash rates respectively.[8]

In addition to higher crash rates from heavier trucks, increasing the weight of trucks causes more wear and tear on key safety components of the vehicle. The 2016 USDOT study found that trucks over 80,000lbs had higher overall out-of-service rates and 18% higher brake violation rates.[9] This is especially concerning because a 2016 study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) found that trucks with any out-of-service violation are 362% more likely to be involved in a crash.[10]

This crash rate data for heavier trucks should be a particular concern for Virginia motorists. The Commonwealth's highways are not lightly-traveled or have truck exclusive lanes. Northern Virginia is consistently rated as one of the most congested areas in the country and drivers through this area pay additional toll fees in an attempt to avoid congestion. Hampton Roads is divided by two rivers with multiple tunnels and bridges creating unique traffic challenges. Congestion and safety in the I-81 corridor, largely driven by heavy truck volumes and elevation changes, is growing public concern and is currently under review by VDOT.

Adding less safe, heavier trucks to these congested interstates and roads will only exacerbate traffic problems and decrease safety for Virginia motorists.

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[8] USDOT, *CTSWL Study*, 2016
[9] Ibid
[10] IIHS, *Crash Risk Factors for Interstate Large Trucks in North Carolina*, 2016

For this reason, any pilot should consider ways to ensure businesses that are pressuring truckers to absorb these additional costs associated with heavier trucks to participate in paying for these added expenses. This should include increased insurance, increased vehicle maintenance, increased fuel costs, and inclusion of liability for any accidents on the business verse just the trucking company. The Commonwealth should look to capture information on truck diversion and access fees on the additional emissions, refund highway passenger users that pay for toll lanes to avoid the additional congestion created by an increase in trucks, and require contribution to Virginia's Rail Enhancement Fund to replace private investment lost due to diversion.

Too many risks – too little benefit - to participate in pilot program

The threshold issue to consider before participating in any pilot is first whether the program does no harm. With the numerous risks to infrastructure, safety, congestion, air quality, freight modal balance, and government and taxpayer resources, it would be impossible for any heavier truck pilot program to hold the Commonwealth and its citizens harmless. In fact, the USDOT has consistently opposed this type of effort to create a patchwork of states finding it makes enforcement and compliance more difficult, contributes little to productivity, and has unintended consequences for safety and highway infrastructure.

Research shows the most likely outcome of increasing truck weights would be more trucks on Virginia's highways and roads. Therefore, the only benefits of the pilot would be lower shipping costs for the few large industrial and manufacturing proponents of the program. These costs would most likely be passed on to trucking companies in higher permit fees, maintenance and replacement vehicles; state and local governments with higher maintenance and construction costs; and eventually Virginians through higher taxes. Participating in the pilot program would be picking winners and losers among industries with no benefits – and only risks - to the public.

The theoretical fifteen year federal pilot project would use Virginia's roads and citizens as a test lab for heavier trucks. While more data may be needed, the risks are too great to experiment on Virginia's motorists, infrastructure and transportation network. A better path would be to allow USDOT and others to continue to refine data collection methods and allow that research to guide policy decisions without needlessly putting the Commonwealth at risk.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Randy Marcus

VIRGINIA AGRIBUSINESS COUNCIL
The Unified Voice of Agribusiness

August 10, 2018

Mr. Keith Wandtke
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Review of Chapters 553/554 and Draft Federal Pilot Program Legislation

Dear Mr. Wandtke:

I am writing you today on behalf of the Virginia Agribusiness Council, representing Virginia's top economic sector, the agriculture and forestry industries. These industries contribute $91 billion to Virginia's economy, including supporting 442,200 jobs.

As the voice for agribusinesses across the Commonwealth, we support opportunities to allow our members to transport agricultural and forestry products in the safest, most cost effective and efficient manner. We recognize that technology has fostered most commodity production to record growth, yet the opportunity for transport of our agricultural and forestry products has, for the most part, remained the same.

This voluntary initiative to participate in a pilot program would allow our members to explore the benefit of increased truck weights on interstates and the opportunity to improve competitive access to markets across the country where weight limits above 80,000 pounds are enforced. The pilot would also provide the opportunity for the Commonwealth to gather additional data and information regarding the use of the proposal, including its safety and impact on mileage.

The Virginia Agribusiness Council would respectfully urge VDOT and other partner agencies to work with our neighboring states to explore joint participation in this pilot program to ensure that you are able to collect the most beneficial data possible, including the usefulness of increased weight limits for our industry, reduction of carrier mileage and impact on public safety.

Sincerely,

Kyle J. Shreve
Executive Director

1025 Boulders Parkway, Suite 111, North Chesterfield, Virginia 23225
(804) 643-3555 • vac@va-agribusiness.org • www.va-agribusiness.org

Michael J. Smaha
U.S. Government Affairs
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August 6, 2018

Ms. Jo Anne P. Maxwell
Division Administrator
Governance and Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219-2000

RE: Support comments for Virginia participation in a Federal data collection pilot program and increased truck weights

Dear Ms. Maxwell:

Owens-Illinois, Inc. (O-I) is writing to express its support of the Commonwealth's participation in the U.S. Department of Transportation program to collect data on increasing weights for six axle vehicles weighing up to 91,000 pounds gross vehicle weight. O-I is the world's largest manufacturer of glass packaging and we operate three plants in the mid-Atlantic region, including two in Virginia one in Toano and one in Ringgold. These plants produce millions of beer bottles daily, which are shipped by truck to brewery customers in Virginia, North Carolina and up and down the East Coast. In Virginia, we employee over three hundred people and generate approximately $914,000 in state and local taxes. O-I's customers in Virginia include MillerCoors in Elkton, Ballast Point in Daleville, Stone Brewing in Richmond and Devil's Backbone in Lexington, just to name a few. Our company is also a member of the S.H.I.P Coalition, a group of manufacturing, agricultural and food and beverage companies, who support modernizing gross vehicle weights on interstate highways.

Under the current weight limits, truck space is not fully utilized, resulting in operational and shipping inefficiency. This requires more trucks on the road to carry orders to our customers. Increasing the allowed gross vehicle weights for trucks would reduce the number of trucks on the road, reduce exhaust emissions, road and infrastructure cost repairs and traffic. There is also a safety benefit as- a U.S. Department of Transportation study found that a 91,000 pound truck with a sixth axle has an improved breaking distance and is no less maneuverable than an 80,000 pound truck.

Virginia's participation in the pilot program will be useful in helping the U.S. Department of Transportation to collect data pertaining to loaded weights of trucks at the time of a crash, which currently is not collected. This data is necessary to help policy makers make informed decisions and could help the Virginia Department of Transportation in planning future infrastructure investment.

Thank you for considering O-I's comments and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at mike.smaha@o-i.com or by phone at (703) 220-9456.

Best regards,

Michael Smaha
Owens-Illinois, Inc.

OWENS-ILLINOIS, INC.
1401 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1005
Arlington, VA 22209-2326

#O VA 220

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USAFOREVER

Ms. Jo Anne P. Maxwell
Division Administrator
Governance and Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219-2000

23219-200099

Commonwealth of Virginia

Wandtke, Keith <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Stakeholders Working Group: Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly (Review of Enrollment in Federal Pilot Program/Project)

Joe Lerch <jlerch@vaco.org>
To: "Wandtke, Keith" <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Fri, Aug 10, 2018 at 5:20 PM

Good Afternoon Keith,

On behalf of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), I am responding to the "Questions for Stakeholder Working Group" and offer the following:

VACo does not support Virginia participation in any federal pilot authorizing six axle vehicles weighing 91,000 lbs to operate on the interstates. Many of Virginia's pavements and bridges, whether interstate, primary or secondary routes, have been designed to handle weights of 80,000 lbs or less. Given this fact, we have serious concerns that any federal pilot, of even limited duration, will put this critical infrastructure at risk of increased damage and deterioration.

The question as to "How should any potential pilot be evaluated?", should begin with a complete inventory of all interstate, primary, secondary and urban pavement and bridges as is relates to their rated weight capacity. For all structures rated below 91,000 lbs, where it is reasonable that such trucks will travel, VDOT should prepare a cost estimate for rebuilding pavement structures and bridges to accommodate this weight.

Let me know if you need additional information in regards to these comments.

Regards,

Joe Lerch

Director of Local Government Policy

Virginia Association of Counties

Phone: (804) 343-2506

jlerch@vaco.org

NORFOLK SOUTHERN™

Norfolk Southern Corporation
Government Relations
411 E. Franklin Street, Suite 501
Richmond, VA 23219

(804) 292-3434 (Direct)
timothy.bentley@nscorp.com

Timothy J. Bentley III
Resident Vice President

August 14, 2018

Mr. Keith Wandtke
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Truck Weight Working Group

Dear Mr. Wandtke:

Norfolk Southern Railway Company is pleased to provide these comments in response to the VDOT Stakeholders' working group for Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly. Norfolk Southern was quite involved in this legislation during the recent 2018 Virginia General Assembly session and welcomes the opportunity to participate in the working group.

Norfolk Southern is proud to be a leading corporate citizen of the Commonwealth. We are one of only seven Class 1 railroads in the entire United States and the only one headquartered in Virginia, and we operate approximately 19,500 railroad route miles in 22 states and the District of Columbia. We serve every major container port in the eastern United States, including the Virginia Ports, and we operate the most extensive intermodal network in the East.

Norfolk Southern Invests Heavily in its Own Infrastructure

As has been stressed in the comments submitted by the Virginia Railroad Association to this working group and in testimony heard during the General Assembly session, the railroad industry is a capital-intensive industry in which the individual private railroad companies own and maintain their own infrastructure. Norfolk Southern operates 1,990 miles of track in Virginia over 1,240 bridges and through 37 tunnels. The track repair budget across the Norfolk Southern system in 2017 alone was $930 million, which included replacing 466 miles of rail, surfacing 5,368 miles of track, replacing 2.5 million crossties and installing 2.1 million tons of rock ballast. This investment in our infrastructure is an investment in our business and is a cost of doing business that we bear. Strategic infrastructure investment has allowed railroads to expand economic development across the Commonwealth and across the nation and is central to how we grow and grow the economies of the communities we serve.

Virginia's Fragile Road Infrastructure Does Not Need Further Stress

At a time when policymakers continue to call for investment into and improvement of the nation's infrastructure, knowingly taking steps to further damage the Commonwealth's highway system by allowing heavier trucks on the highways is misguided policy. Furthermore, any use of tax dollars to offset damage trucks do to the highways is tipping the balance of freight transportation in favor of trucks. Allowing heavier trucks to do more damage to the highways at the same time the public is clamoring for safety and capacity relief on I-81, I-95, and elsewhere while government is working to respond is a fundamental policy contradiction. The Commonwealth has recognized that its highway infrastructure needs help, whether through tolling, lane and tunnel construction and expansion, or new road and bridge development. Now is not the time to introduce a new variable to the delicate balance that currently exists.

The Port of Virginia Relies on Rail

Virginia has recognized the value that rail plays in growing and sustaining the Port of Virginia, both in terms of economic development and in terms of moving more freight out of Hampton Roads by rail. Currently the Port moves approximately 35% of its cargo by rail, roughly twice the amount moved by rail by any other east coast port. Norfolk Southern has invested heavily in its port access routes through the Heartland Corridor clearance projects, dramatically reducing transit times for freight to get to the Midwest. This $290 million public private partnership raised the clearances in 29 tunnels to allow for double stacked intermodal trains to better serve the Port of Virginia, taking trucks off the highways, adding velocity, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Again, Norfolk Southern has invested in its infrastructure in partnership with government. Norfolk Southern is proud of its partnership with the Commonwealth to efficiently move goods from Port to consumer and from producer to Port. Whether it's coal, grain, intermodal, or merchandise freight, Norfolk Southern moves good safely, efficiently, and in an environmentally sensitive way.

Any Perceived Sense of Urgency is Unfounded

Virginia should not be a testing ground for heavier trucks, putting our infrastructure and safety at risk, when there is no pilot program to evaluate and no demonstrated appetite in Congress at a level sufficient to create one. The Commonwealth should be extremely reticent to signal to Congress that there is any appetite for a pilot in Virginia and instead should evaluate any participation if and only if a concrete program has been passed. The most recent failure to pass a pilot program in Congress was in 2017. No proposed pilots have contained any funds for road repair, recordkeeping, data collection, or public safety. Virginia would be left to cover all of those costs and all of the infrastructure repairs necessitated by heavier trucks, all while our bridges age and our highways become more congested.

Despite what was discussed at the working group meeting on July 27th, it is not the role of VDOT and the members of this working group to tell Congress what a pilot program should look like. It is up to VDOT and all of the Commonwealth's stakeholders to evaluate a pilot if it ever becomes law. No matter what we say in this working group, it will be used to try to lobby Congress and to suggest that "if you craft it this way, they will participate." This working group

should thoughtfully and thoroughly consider what the implications of allowing heavier trucks on our highways and bridges would be so that the General Assembly and the Administration may evaluate a pilot if it ever is enacted by Congress.

We Are Here to Discuss Pilot Programs, Not Broad Policy Shifts

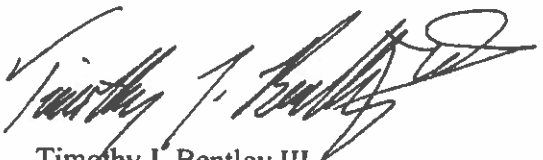
Many of the arguments we have heard in favor of participation in a pilot are really more geared toward a fundamental policy shift and not mere data collection. Driver shortages, lower transportation costs, and efficiency improvements – these are not data-collection goals, nor are they policies that the Commonwealth should be subsidizing at the expense of other modes of transportation. Norfolk Southern not only supports economic growth in the communities we serve, we rely upon it to grow our business. But long term economic growth is not, and should not, be achieved through pilot programs and data studies. The proponents of the pilot program are making arguments for a fundamental policy shift, not for temporary participation in a pilot program that will sunset after a period of time. Furthermore, the pressure to make a pilot permanent would be great given the investment in trucks that would be necessary to participate in the first place. We need to be cautious that any participation in a pilot program may have the effect of changing transportation policy in Virginia by reason of the investment required to participate.

Real Economic Growth is Not Achieved by Participating in Temporary Programs

The argument that participation in a pilot program will boost Virginia economic competitiveness is illogical given that a pilot program is temporary. Virginia, through VEDP, GO Virginia, the Virginia Chamber, and numerous Administration and General Assembly initiatives, is working every day to improve Virginia's business climate and economic competitiveness. Participating in a temporary data collection study, especially one without significant funding from the federal government, does nothing to boost competitiveness – it just puts our fragile highway infrastructure at greater risk of damage.

Norfolk Southern appreciates this opportunity to comment at this stage of the working group's process and looks forward to participating and commenting further as the groups work progresses. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Timothy J. Bentley III

Commonwealth of Virginia

Wandtke, Keith <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Stakeholders Working Group: Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly (Review of Enrollment in Federal Pilot Program/Project)

Meade, Martha <mmeade@aaamidatlantic.com> Thu, Jul 26, 2018 at 10:12 AM
To: "Wandtke, Keith" <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>
Cc: "Partick Cushing (pcushing@williamsmullen.com)" <pcushing@williamsmullen.com>, "Meade, Martha" <mmeade@aaamidatlantic.com>

Keith, I regret that I, nor a representative from AAA, are able to attend tomorrow's meeting, however, I have provided below AAA's thoughts on the issue being consider by the group.

I thank you for including AAA and I applaud lawmakers and stakeholders for focusing on this important safety issue.

- **According to the most recent American Society of Civil Engineers' Infrastructure Report Card**:
  - An estimated $123 billion is necessary to meet the nation's backlog of bridge rehabilitation needs;
  - Thirty percent of VA bridges are over 50 years old;
  - About 1 in every 4 VA bridges are structural deficient (e.g. require maintenance, rehabilitation, or replacement) or functionally obsolete (meaning they no longer meet today's design standards); and
  - These 4,871 structurally deficient or functionally obsolete structures are primarily a result of the gap between required and available funding.

Now more than ever, industry, safety and government stakeholders must approach this important policy matter very cautiously.

- **As we strive to improve the efficient movement of freight to improve the nation's economy, AAA believes we must account for the potential infrastructure and safety impacts of allowing bigger and heavier trucks travel our roads and bridges.**

- ***AAA offers the following recommendations for the work group's consideration:***
  - (Equipment) AAA recommends that all three axle trailers be fitted with disc brakes.

- According to a 2017 AAAFTS report on Truck Safety Technologies, installing air disc brakes on all combination unit trucks (existing as well as new trucks) could potentially prevent as many as: 2,411 crashes, 1,447 injuries and 37 deaths annually.

- Better braking performance and resistance to out of adjustment conditions are characteristic of disk brakes.

- The performance of most crash avoidance technology is dependent on the foundation brake system therefore out of adjustment brakes will compromise the performance of these crash avoidance technologies.

o (Equipment) All 6-axle tractor-trailer combinations must be fitted with electronic stability control and F-Cam systems.

- The 2017 AAAFTS report showed that installing video-based onboard safety monitoring systems on all large trucks, existing as well as new trucks, could potentially prevent as many as: 63,000 crashes, 17,733 injuries and 293 deaths annually.

- All 6-axle tractor trailers should have electronic enforcement capabilities and electronic logging devices.

o (Safety) A system of tracking safety performance data of these vehicles should be established. Data collected would include, distance travelled, weight violations, police reportable crashes.

Martha Mitchell Meade
Manager Public and Government Affairs

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9210 Arboretum Pkwy, Ste. 290 | Richmond, VA 23236

News Releases | Senior Driving | Teen Driving

Life's small daily decisions are like brush strokes and color choices on the painting that is your life ... over the years, each choice adds up to paint a picture ... make great choices with each small brush stroke ... and your painting will be unique and wonderful.

From: Wandtke, Keith <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 26, 2018 8:44 AM
To: dbennett@vatrucking.org; Chris Lagow <chris@lagowlobby.com>; timothy.bentley@nscorp.com; Kenneth Hutcheson <ken@olddominionpublicaffairs.com>; stan@heftywiley.com; matthew.wells@westrock.com; Randy_marcus@csx.com; jackerman@vml.org; Sjohnson@hancockdaniel.com; jpalmore@reedsmith.com; RBohannon@huntonak.com; Moss, Cannon <Cannon.Moss@nscorp.com>; phowe@vaforestry.org; Rob@vtca.org; kyle@va-agribusiness.org; jlerch@vaco.org; Patrick.Harrison@dmv.virginia.gov; Wayne.Davis@dmv.virginia.gov; Michael.Mclaughlin@drpt.virginia.gov; Ron.Maxey@vsp.virginia.gov; Ed.Zimmer@dof.virginia.gov; info@valoggers.org; Paxton, Kathryn <kathryn.paxton@vdacs.virginia.gov>; andrew.smith@vafb.com; drinehart@portofvirginia.com; mg@guthridgeassociates.com; tperrin@lindlcorp.com; Meade, Martha <mmeade@aaamidatlantic.com>; Ivan.Rucker@dot.gov; Chuck Duvall <cduvall@lindlcorp.com>; Brandi.thorpe@dmv.virginia.gov; david@vamaritime.com; Matthew.Gordon@anheuser-busch.com; DelSGarrett@house.virginia.gov; district40@senate.virginia.gov; DelDYancey@house.virginia.gov; Cnoonan@dls.virginia.gov; Ebuck@dls.virginia.gov; Brett Vassey <bvassey@vamanufacturers.com>; Shepherd Cronemeyer <Shepherd@va-agribusiness.org>; katie@hellebushconsulting.com
Cc: Jo Maxwell <joanne.maxwell@vdot.virginia.gov>; Catherine Mcghee <cathy.mcghee@vdot.virginia.gov>; Holly Jones <holly.jones@vdot.virginia.gov>
Subject: Stakeholders Working Group: Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly (Review of Enrollment in Federal Pilot Program/Project)

Greetings Stakeholders,

[Quoted text hidden]

Commonwealth of Virginia

Wandtke, Keith <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Chapters 553 and 554 Working Group

info@valoggers.org <info@valoggers.org> Wed, Jul 11, 2018 at 7:52 AM
To: Keith Wandtke <Keith.Wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Good morning Keith,

I plan to attend all meetings and have them scheduled on my calendar. I will represent the logging businesses in Virginia who are members of the Virginia Loggers Association.

We will bring our goal of attaining the legal right to haul 90,000 pounds of commercial forest products (harvested trees, logs, chips, residuals and rough sawn green lumber) on interstate highways. This has been the law in Virginia since July 1, 2015 except rough sawn green lumber was added in July 1, 2018.

VLA is part of the American Loggers Council which supports allowing state legal weights for these forest products on all interstate highways in the US.

Thanks,

Ron Jenkins
Executive Director
Virginia Loggers Association
info@valoggers.org
804 677 - 4290

Make plans now to attend our annual conference on August 24 - 26, 2018 at the Williamsburg Lodge, Williamsburg, VA.

The Virginia Loggers Association proudly endorses Forestry Mutual Insurance as the preferred provider of Virginia worker's compensation insurance. Chris Huff chuff@forestrymutual.com **919-810-9485**

WestRock

501 S. 5th Street
Richmond, VA 21219

office: 804.444.7070
www.westrock.com

August 17th, 2018

Ms. Jo Anne P. Maxwell
Division Administrator, Governance and Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

RE: Working Group: Chapters 553 and 554 of the 2018 Session of the General Assembly (HB 1276/SB 504)

Dear Ms. Maxwell,

WestRock appreciates the opportunity to provide the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) with feedback on Virginia's potential participation in a federal pilot program to allow tractor-trailers to operate at 91,000 pounds on interstate highways, with the addition of a sixth axle.

Who We Are

WestRock is a leading provider of differentiated paper and packaging solutions with 45,000 employees in 300 locations around the world. Virginia is one of our largest states both by employment and by production levels. We have over 3,000 employees at 8 facilities, which include 3 large paper mills at Covington, West Point, and Hopewell. We are the backbone of Virginia's forest products industry, which is the third largest economic sector in the Commonwealth. Each year, WestRock contributes roughly $1,000,000,000 directly to the economy of Virginia through payroll, taxes, supplier purchases and other spending. We are also the largest exporter from the Port of Virginia by volume.

Our Interest in the Issue

Paperboard is a heavy product; every year we ship about 3,000,000 **tons** of freight through Virginia. We use a variety of transportation methods, and roughly half of that tonnage is by truck. Moreover, nearly 500,000 of those truck tons stay entirely within Virginia. Our shipments by truck reach the current 80,000 pound interstate weight limit when roughly 75% of the trailer's space is used, meaning that we ship about 25% air with every truckload.

In addition to product shipments, we also rely on trucks to deliver raw materials (primarily whole trees and wood chips) to our large paper mills. In one year alone, the Covington woodyard will process roughly 135,000 truckloads of fiber.

Given our reliance on trucks, we are very supportive of Virginia's participation in a federal pilot program that would allow up to ten states to voluntarily permit tractor-trailers to operate at

91,000 pounds on interstate highways with the addition of a sixth axle. Based on preliminary research by the Federal Department of Transportation Highway Safety Administration (hereafter referred to as the "USDOT Study"),[1] and our own experience with jurisdictions that currently allow for heavier trucks, we believe this combination to be a safer, more efficient, more cost-effective means of transporting goods than the current 80,000 pound, five axle configuration, which has been the federal standard for most interstate highways since 1982.

VDOT has asked stakeholders for feedback on several topics regarding Virginia's participation in the pilot program, which we will attempt to address below.

We understand that there are several proposals at the federal level that could involve heavier or longer tractor-trailer combinations. Our comments are drawn strictly to the proposed pilot described by Congressman John Katko (hereafter, the "Katko Letter") in the attached letter.

Fee Structure

WestRock supports a permitting process for vehicles participating in the pilot, both as a means of tracking these vehicles, and as a means of funding the cost of the pilot. To that end, we are supportive of a reasonable permitting fee that would be assessed per truck on an annual basis, similar to the existing annual hauling permit issued in Virginia.

Axle Spacing for Qualifying Tractor Trucks

WestRock would defer to existing federal and state axle spacing requirements.

Access from Loading Facilities onto a Primary or Secondary Road

Virginia currently allows heavy trucks to operate in excess of the 80,000 pound interstate limit on many primary and secondary roads. There is an existing process to determine routes that are or are not appropriate for overweight trucks, and we believe this process could be applied to the proposed pilot vehicle, taking into account the superior weight distribution provided by a sixth axle.

For access questions regarding specific loading and unloading points, VDOT and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) should work with interested stakeholders, who should be prepared to assist in providing resources necessary to re-rate existing roads and bridges.

Sufficiency of Existing Data in Determining if Certain Routes and Bridges Should Be Excluded

Virginia currently administers a system to route overweight and overlength vehicles (some well in excess of 100,000 pounds). We believe that this system could be used to broadly determine what routes and bridges would be appropriate for the pilot. The pilot truck configuration is designed to be compliant with federal bridge formulas.

Other Issues that VDOT Should Consider

While VDOT's first priority is and should be to maintain the safety and integrity of Virginia's highway infrastructure, we believe it is important that the agency take into account the potential economic benefit that would be provided by a more efficient and cost-effective transportation infrastructure.

Heavy trucks serve as the lynchpin of the state's manufacturing, agricultural, and forest products industries. This economic benefit (including the tax revenues that the state derives from them) has historically been viewed as far outweighing the impact of road wear and tear,

[1] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, "Report to Congress," April 2016 https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/sw/map21tswstudy/

and we believe that this pilot is no different. In addition to economic benefits, heavy trucks provide over $1,000,000,000 in annual funding for the Federal Highway Trust Fund through the Heavy Vehicle Use Tax.[2] Moreover, t the data clearly points to the fact that a 91,000 pound truck with six axles will do less damage to roads than an 80,000 pound truck with five.

In addition, VDOT should consider:

- Congestion benefits from removing trucks from the road,
- The relief the pilot could provide from the severe shortage of truck drivers, and
- Safety benefits from improved stopping distance with the addition of a sixth axle

What are the Potential Advantages of Pilot Participation?

The current 80,000 pound, five axle configuration has been the standard on federal interstates since 1982. Since that time, vehicle technology has progressed tremendously. Just as we have updated interstate speed limits since that time, we should similarly look to update our truck weight limits. The pilot vehicle has a number of benefits, which are reflected both in preliminary data from the USDOT Study and other jurisdictions where heavier trucks are allowed to operate (including most US states, as well as Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdon).

- The proposed pilot configuration is just as safe or safer than the current configuration.
    - A one foot reduction in stopping distance compared to the current configuration.[3]
    - The USDOT Study found that the proposed pilot configuration had otherwise comparable handling to the current configuration.[4]
    - A ten-year pilot in Idaho found that there was no heightened safety risk with increased weights.[5]
    - A 20-year pilot program in Maine attributed a 70-year low in road fatalities to increased truck weights.[6]
    - Since the United Kingdom raised its gross vehicle weight limit for six-axle vehicles in 2001, fatal truck related accidents had declined by 35% by 2006.[7]
    - Trucks weighing in excess of 80,000 pounds with added axles have been travelling the interstates in the Pacific Northwest for years, providing that area with a powerful economic boost. In fact, WestRock's Tacoma, Washington paper mill realizes over $1,000,000 in annual logistics savings because of the ability to move heavier loads.
    - Currently, Virginia allows vehicles well in excess of 80,000 pounds to travel state roads, many of them operating by right at close to 90,000 pounds at five axles.

[2] https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/091116/pdfs/fhwatri-fold.pdf
[3] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study Technical Reports, Vol. II, "Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis," June 2015, pp. 60-65.
[4] ibid
[5] http://www.capitalpress.com/Idaho/20150615/us-house-passes-idaho-truck-weight-bill
[6] "Road Deaths at 70 Year Low in Maine," By Nok-Noi Ricker, *Bangor Daily News*, January 12, 2015.
[7] Transportation Statistics Bulletin: Road and Freight Statistics 2007, UK Department for Transport, 2008.

Each year, DMV issues thousands of overweight permits. Allowing these vehicles to travel on interstates, as opposed to roads that travel through our neighborhoods, could provide significant safety and congestion benefits.

- The proposed pilot configuration would cause less damage to roads.
  - With six axles, a 91,000 pound vehicle has a superior weight distribution (15,166.7 pounds per axle) than an 80,000 pound vehicle with five (16,000 pounds per axle).
  - The USDOT Study points to a 2.4 to 4.2% decrease in life-cycle pavement costs.[8]
  - The Minnesota Department of Transportation found that the addition of a sixth axle created a 37% reduction in road wear.[9]
  - The pilot configuration is designed to be compliant with federal bridge formulas.[10]
- The USDOT Study points to a 0.4% reduction in enforcement costs.[11]
- The proposed pilot could reduce congestion.
  - The USDOT Study points to a 1% reduction in truck vehicle miles travelled.[12]
  - On corridors heavily travelled by trucks, such as Interstate 81, safely increasing truck weights could help ease congestion without costly road improvements.
- The USDOT Study indicates that the pilot configuration would result in 2,400,000,000 pound reduction in annual carbon dioxide emissions, if broadly adopted.[13]
- Adoption of the pilot vehicle would result in a powerful economic benefit for Virginia.
  - WestRock's facilities compete in an intense global and domestic market. Additionally, our Virginia facilities compete internally with other WestRock locations for capital spending and production levels. Allowing these facilities to move their products in a more cost-efficient manner would provide them with a powerful competitive advantage. WestRock would see additional downstream benefits from the pilot insofar as it benefits our many Virginia customers.
  - A significant amount of WestRock's intra-state truck traffic originates in Covington and terminates at the Port of Virginia. The fact that Virginia has such a powerful international trade asset within its borders makes the state especially well-suited for pilot participation.

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[8] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, "Report to Congress," April 2016, p10
[9] Minnesota Department of Transportation "Minnesota Truck Size and Weight Project" June 2006, p.ES-3
[10] Interstate Highway Truck Weights- White Paper- Maine DOT September 20,2010
[11] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, "Report to Congress," April 2016, p10
[12] ibid
[13] US DOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study Technical Reports, Vol. I "Technical Summary Report", June 2015, p. ES 11

- Virginia, along with other states in the nation, is experiencing a severe shortage of truck drivers (an issue which has been compounded by new federal Hours of Service standards).[14] This drives up costs for employers and can lead to significant disruptions in logistics networks if required trucks are unavailable. Allowing for the movement of freight with fewer vehicles would alleviate this problem.

What are the Potential Disadvantages of Participation?

WestRock does not see any disadvantages to Virginia's participation in a carefully crafted pilot program. However, we would like to provide our feedback on concerns raised by other stakeholders.

- Claim: the pilot configuration is less safe that the current configuration, and the proposed vehicles have a greater number of violations.
  - Fact: The USDOT Study clearly states that "Vehicle weight or configuration [are] not predominant factors in predicting a violation."[15]

  - Fact: The USDOT Study notes that there is no hard data to point to pilot vehicles having a higher crash rate than existing configurations. While opponents of the pilot frequently point to the DOT study's reference of an increase in crashes in Washington state, the study plainly states that:
    "Due to the limited number of States with suitable data, the analysis of crash rates cannot be extended to other States or used to draw meaningful conclusions on a national basis. This lack of weight data on State crash reports also made it impossible to complete a comparative assessment between trucks operating at and below current Federal size and weight limits and trucks that operate above those limits."[16]

    These limitations arise from the fact that much heavier trucks were used in two out of three state-level data sets, but the third (which closely replicated the SAFE Trucking Act configuration) proved safer than the control vehicle in another state.
    - To make its accident comparisons, the U.S. DOT used data from three states: Washington, Idaho and Michigan. The six-axle trucks studied in Michigan and Idaho had weight limits of 105,500 pounds—reflecting an increase of more than twice what the SAFE Trucking Act proposes.[17] As a result, data from these two states showing higher accident rates is not predictive of the SAFE Trucking Act.
    - The crash involvement rate of heaver six-axle trucks in Washington was less than the similar rates for five-axle trucks in Idaho.[18] Yet, no one is arguing that five-axle trucks shouldn't be used in Idaho.
    - There were no fatalities on six-axle trucks operating in Washington State, yet there were 10 fatal truck crashes involving five-axle trucks traveling at the current weight limit.[19]

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[14] https://www.richmond.com/as-truck-driver-shortage-continues-richmond-area-companies-bolster-efforts/article_c25fcf32-d45a-5806-aa9a-dae6c5442339.html

[15] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, "Report to Congress," April 2016, p10

[16] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, "Report to Congress," April 2016, p18

[17] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study Technical Reports, Vol. II, "Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis," June 2015, pp. 60-65.

[18] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study Technical Reports, Vol. II, "Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis," June 2015, p.13.

        - The USDOT Study states: "Comparisons of crash injury severity…showed reduced severity for six-axle configurations."[20]

    - All 50 states, plus Canada and Mexico, allow heavier vehicles on their roads. This includes Virginia, which not only allows trucks to operate at weights higher than 80,000 pounds on state roads, but also allows certain vehicles (such as sealed ocean-going containers) to travel on interstate highways in excess of that weight.[21] Thirty other states have similar provisions that allow vehicles heavier than 80,000 pounds to travel interstate highways.[22] By and large, these vehicles operate safely.

- Claim: The pilot vehicle would do significant damage to roads and bridges.
    - Fact: This claim is not supported by existing data. While the USDOT Study does point to a $1.1B one-time bridge cost, this cost would be spread across the entire federal highway bridge system.[23]

- Claim: The proposed pilot configuration would result in the modal shift of rail traffic to trucks, actually increasing the number of trucks on the highway.
    - Fact: The U.S. DOT Study points to a 1% reduction in truck VMT from broad adoption of the pilot configuration.[24] This means that there will be fewer trucks on the road, not more.

    - Based on WestRock's experience, the addition of an extra 11,000 pounds would not significantly change the company's decision on shipping modes, which are based on a number of factors in addition to cost. We would likely ship the same tonnage of weight by truck as we currently do; however, we would be able to ship that amount with fewer trucks.

    - Finally, the state should dismiss arguments that outdated regulations should be maintained simply because they are perceived to benefit the economic interests of a particular industry.

- Claim: The pilot would force truck owners to pay for expensive modifications to their vehicles, while at the same time seeing a reduction in revenue from a reduced number of loads.
    - Fact: Participation in the pilot is strictly voluntary. Those that chose to add the additional axle will have a competitive advantage over those that do not and will likely be able to charge a portion of the shipper's avoided costs as a premium. Additionally, there currently exists and will remain a significant market for loads that do not meet the existing weight limits.

- Claim: Participating in a pilot would be expensive and burdensome on the Commonwealth.

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[19] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study Technical Reports, Vol. II, "Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis," June 2015, p.26.
[20] ibid
[21] U.S. DOT "Compilation of Existing State Truck Size and Weight Laws" May 2015, pps. 18-206
[22] ibid
[23] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, "Report to Congress," April 2016, p10, 19.
[24] U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study, "Report to Congress," April 2016, p10.

- Fact: Virginia DMV currently administers a best-in-class overweight and oversize permitting and enforcement program, issuing thousands of permits annually and operating thirteen fixed and several mobile weigh stations. WestRock firmly believes that the agency is more than equipped to manage the issuance of permits and the attendant enforcement.

- WestRock is supportive of a reasonable permit fee that would help to cover the costs of data collection associated with the pilot.

- Claim: A pilot program would be of limited value if surrounding states do not participate.
  - Fact: Virginia sees a significant volume on traffic that stays entirely within Virginia. WestRock alone moves some 500,000 tons of product entirely within the Commonwealth.

  - Fact: Virginia has a unique asset in the Port of Virginia, that results in significant volumes of intra-state truck traffic. Even if surrounding states do not participate, businesses in Virginia shipping to and from the Port (which projects massive growth over the next 50 years)[25] would likely participate, providing a wealth of data for VDOT to evaluate.

- Claim: There is no currently authorized federal pilot, and Virginia should not take any action until a federal pilot is finalized.
  - Fact: As demonstrated by the Katko Letter, there is significant interest at the federal level in authorizing a pilot program to address data shortcomings in the US DOT study. Since the proposed pilot would be limited to 10 states, Virginia should take all appropriate steps to position itself to participate in a pilot. This includes adopting legislation authorizing participation, since Virginia's legislature meets for only a portion of each year.

  - Once a pilot is authorized, the Commonwealth can evaluate the program on its specific merits. It is clear from the level of support in the 2018 Virginia General Assembly session that there is broad interest among Virginia's major employers in participating in such a pilot.

What Actions Would be Needed to Mitigate Potential Negative Impacts?

WestRock believes that safety should be the highest priority of any pilot program. While we are confident that the pilot vehicles would indeed be safer than the existing fleet, we supported the inclusion of a withdrawal provision in HB1276 and SB504 and continue to support the inclusion of such a provision (which would allow the Commissioner of Highways to withdraw from the pilot program at any point) in any authorizing language going forward. We believe other considerations (enforcement, permitting, inspection, etc.) can be addressed using existing DMV and VDOT systems. Costs associated with the pilot could be recovered by a reasonable permit fee for participants.

How Should a Pilot be Evaluated?

As noted in the Katko Letter, the pilot is designed primarily to address gaps in safety data identified in the USDOT Study. With that in mind, we believe that safety should be the primary means of evaluating any pilot program. Additionally, VDOT may wish to consider evaluating

[25] http://www.portofvirginia.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/TPOV-master-plan-2065-final-020316.pdf

road and bridge wear and tear, congestion, and economic benefit, provided that a reliable and reasonable means of obtaining that data can be determined.

What Steps Should be Taken to Ensure Safety, Mobility, and State of Good Repair are Maintained During a Pilot?

This question pre-supposes that the pilot vehicles would be radically different from existing ones in safety, congestion impact, and road wear and tear. To the degree that the vehicles do have a different impact, we anticipate that impact will be positive. Virginia has an existing system in place to ensure that these concerns are addressed, and we do not see any reason that the current system would be inadequate to support a pilot program.

Summary

The proposed pilot program is a net positive for Virginia: the trucks would be safer and more efficient, and Virginia's economy and its citizens would benefit from its adoption. We encourage VDOT to make its recommendations and decisions based on facts and data, and not misinformation, fear, or the desire to protect narrow economic interests. Simply put, there is no reason that Virginia should not position itself to participate in a federal pilot. If no pilot emerges, or the program that does is not to the Commonwealth's liking, then we are no worse off than we are today. However, if we determine too late that pilot participation is in our best interests, and we have not laid the groundwork to act, we risk placing the state at a significant competitive disadvantage relative to our peers.

For these reasons, we strongly support Virginia taking all steps necessary to participate in the proposed federal pilot program.

Sincerely,

Matthew S. Wells
Senior Regional Manager, State Government Relations

American
Forest & Paper
Association

August 23, 2018

Ms. Jo Anne P. Maxwell
Division Administrator
Governance and Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219-2000

RE: Comments in Support of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Participation in a Federal Data Collection Pilot Program regarding Increased Truck Weights

Dear Ms. Maxwell:

On behalf of the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments supporting the Commonwealth of Virginia's participation in the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) program to collect data on increasing weights for six-axle vehicles weighing up to 91,000 pounds gross vehicle weight.

AF&PA serves to advance a sustainable U.S. pulp, paper, packaging, tissue and wood products manufacturing industry through fact-based public policy and marketplace advocacy. AF&PA member companies make products essential for everyday life from renewable and recyclable resources and are committed to continuous improvement through the industry's sustainability initiative - Better Practices, Better Planet 2020. The forest products industry accounts for approximately four percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures over $200 billion in products annually, and employs approximately 950,000 men and women. The industry meets a payroll of approximately $50 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 45 states.

Need for Modernized Trucks

Truck weight limits on the national highway system have been frozen at 80,000 pounds for over 30 years. But trucks exceeding this weight already are on state and local roads. More than 90 percent of states allow heavier trucks to access some or all secondary roads; yet, federal regulations by and large keep them off the interstates – the safest place for truck shipments. In addition, many of the heavier trucks that are permitted on state roads operate on only five axles – instead of the safer six axles. Based on preliminary U.S. DOT data, the addition of a sixth axle makes trucks more fuel efficient, less damaging to roads, and safer – even with the addition of 11,000 pounds of cargo.

Additionally, adopting a modernized 91,000 pound, six axle configuration would reduce the total number of trucks on the road. Under the current federal weight limits, truck space is not fully utilized, resulting in operational and shipping inefficiency. The U.S. DOT estimates that by 2025, the amount of freight shipped throughout the U.S. will increase by 87 percent from 2000 levels. Our national highway system cannot accommodate the coming surge in increased freight without also making changes to reduce the number of trucks hauling that freight.

Finally, the adoption of modernized trucks would allow shipping-intensive businesses in the United States to more effectively compete with those in Canada, Mexico, and other countries that have long had higher weight limits for trucks.

Other State Pilot Programs
Other states have conducted truck weight pilot programs. A ten-year pilot in Idaho found there was no heightened safety risk with increased weights, and the U.S. DOT concluded that six-axle trucks had better braking. Likewise, a report on a 20-year pilot program in Maine attributed a 70-year low in road fatalities to increased truck weights. The Minnesota DOT found that the addition of a sixth axle created a 37 percent reduction in road wear and an overall reduction in the number of trips needed to transport products. Modern trucks also are federal bridge formula compliant.

Data Collection
While we believe that preliminary data collected by a recent U.S. DOT study shows the benefits of a modern truck configuration, the study concluded that more data was needed. This data can only be gathered by monitoring these trucks in a real-world environment as part of a pilot program. Virginia's participation in such a program will be useful in helping the U.S. DOT collect this important data that is necessary to help policy makers make informed decisions. Moreover, this data could help the Virginia DOT in planning future infrastructure investment.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts on the Commonwealth of Virginia's participation in the federal pilot program. Bringing trucking into the 21st century will make roads safer for families, minimize congestion on state and local roads, and reduce infrastructure costs, saving taxpayer dollars.

Again, AF&PA supports updating the antiquated weight limits on the federal interstate so that truck traffic can be reduced in a safe and efficient manner. If you have any questions, please contact Fara Klein, Manager, State Government Affairs at (202) 463-5168 or Fara_Klein@afandpa.org.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Bartheld
Vice President, Government Affairs
American Forest & Paper Association

INTERNATIONAL PAPER

JULIE ALSUP
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS MANAGER
GLOBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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JULIE.ALSUP@IPAPER.COM

August 21, 2018

Mr. Keith R. Wandtke
Senior Policy Analyst
Governance and Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Wandtke:

On behalf of International Paper's (IP) 660 employees at our five manufacturing facilities in Virginia, we are pleased that VDOT is evaluating its participation in a potential federal heavy truck weight pilot program. In today's challenging transportation market, ensuring the safe and efficient transportation of our inbound materials and outbound finished products is paramount to our competitiveness. IP has advocated for trucking efficiency legislation to modernize existing trucks for well over a decade because it would provide positive results for our supply chain needs. Allowing manufacturers like IP to fill the 8-10 feet of empty space in the trucks departing our manufacturing facilities would be a dramatic step forward in increased trucking efficiency, while prioritizing safety due to the additional axle and brakes of a 91,000 lb., six-axle truck.

Because truck weight reform is such a priority for our company, we feel that it is critically important to respond to VDOT's questions regarding issues or implications to be considered when determining whether Virginia should participate in a pilot authorizing six-axle vehicles weighing 91,000 lbs. on interstates.

Please also see the attached 2-page overview that includes critical safety, efficiency and environmental points that should be strongly considered by VDOT as well as International Paper's facility overview for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

International Paper's responses to questions posed by VDOT with regard to areas for consideration in a pilot are below:

<u>The fee structure for qualifying tractor trucks:</u>

- Historically, shippers like International Paper have supported a reasonable increase in heavy vehicle fees to carry the additional weight. Supporters of truck weight reform that were part of the Coalition for Transportation Productivity from approximately 2008-2016 proposed an increased heavy vehicle permit fee during the development of the federal Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) legislation. While fees may be considered, they should be reasonable.

Issues related to reasonable access from loading facilities onto a primary or secondary highway and interstate highways:

- Ensuring reasonable access from industrial sites and onto both primary and secondary highways, as well as interstates, is imperative to ensuring a functional program that will result in meaningful data for analysis by VDOT and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The sufficiency of existing data in determining if certain routes and bridges should be excluded from the federal pilot program or project:

- IP has long believed that states should take the lead in determining which interstates routes and bridges are best suited for heavier trucks.
- It is important to note that the U.S. Department of Transportation has affirmed that 91,000 lb. six-axle trucks are federal bridge formula compliant.
- Shippers like International Paper will want to understand the magnitude of roads and bridges that are excluded as well as their locations.

Any other issues that should be considered by the Department?

- VDOT should consider the benefits related to road wear and reduced pavement restoration costs due to the lighter per tire footprint as a result of the added sixth axle, as well as the benefits of needing fewer trucks to move the same amount of goods.
- VDOT should consider how the Commonwealth could work with neighboring states on a seamless integration of pilots if other contiguous states choose to opt-in to the pilot program.
- VDOT should review data for modal shift due to the more productive trucks, which we do not expect to have any significant findings. VDOT should take into account the U.S. Department of Transportation's findings in its 2016 Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight report that found minimal shift in transportation modes as a result of more efficient trucking.
- In its analysis, VDOT should consider the economic benefits of more efficient trucking to Virginia manufacturers.

What are the advantages (positive impacts)/disadvantages (negative impacts) of increasing the maximum allowable load to 91,000 pounds? What information/data is available to support or quantify said advantages/disadvantages (impacts)?

- As stated above, International Paper could safely maximize each shipment departing our manufacturing facilities or inbound materials coming into our facilities. Our finished products are heavy and lead to a truck meeting the maximum federal weight limit before filling up. Safely increasing truck weights to 91,000 lbs. on six axles would benefit IP's supply chain operations as well as those of the broader forest products and manufacturing industries across Virginia. IP could send the same amount of freight on four trucks instead of five. This would reduce truck traffic or, better said, curb truck traffic given the expected increase in truck traffic over the next decade.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from a reduction in trucks.
- Improved safety due to the extra axle's enhanced braking capabilities and the reduction in truck traffic by fully loading each truck.

- Increased fuel efficiencies as a result of fewer trucks needed to carry the same amount of goods.

How should any potential pilot be evaluated? What criteria should be considered and what data will be required?

- VDOT should prioritize safety results of this study, which seeks to evaluate the safety of heavier trucks with the additional axle and brakes.
- Also paramount for evaluation at the conclusion of the pilot are the benefits of heavier trucks with a sixth axle to Virginia's infrastructure due to the lighter per tire footprint over time and the economic benefits to Virginia manufacturers and agriculture leaders. These key areas should be weighed strongly along with the trucking productivity benefits.
- The benefits of the fuel efficiencies achieved as a result of heavier trucks should also be evaluated. With the 91,000 lb. six-axle configuration, fewer truckloads are required to carry the same amount of goods.
- Evaluating truck crash data (i.e. the weight of the truck, number of axles, etc.) of all trucks involved in accidents during this timeframe, as required by U.S. DOT, will provide critical information to U.S. DOT for analysis.

Other issues to be considered:

IP sends significant freight to the Port of Virginia for export as well as along the I-95 corridor, and these are critical and congested freight corridors that would benefit from more productive trucks. VDOT should prioritize Virginia's key freight corridors in this pilot to make this initiative meaningful in terms of data collection and trucking efficiencies.

In closing, thank you again for your focus on this important International Paper priority. Please contact me or Kenneth Lin, International Paper's Regional Government Relations Manager, who is a member of the Virginia DOT Stakeholder Working group, with any questions. Kenneth can be reached at 919-831-4764 or Kenneth.Lin@ipaper.com.

Sincerely,

Julie Alsup

Julie Alsup
International Paper

Cc: Kenneth Lin, Regional Government Relations Manager, International Paper
W. Scott Johnson, Esq., Hancock, Daniel & Johnson, P.C., Consultant for International Paper
Tyler Cox, Hancock, Daniel & Johnson, P.C., Consultant for International Paper

S.H.I.P.

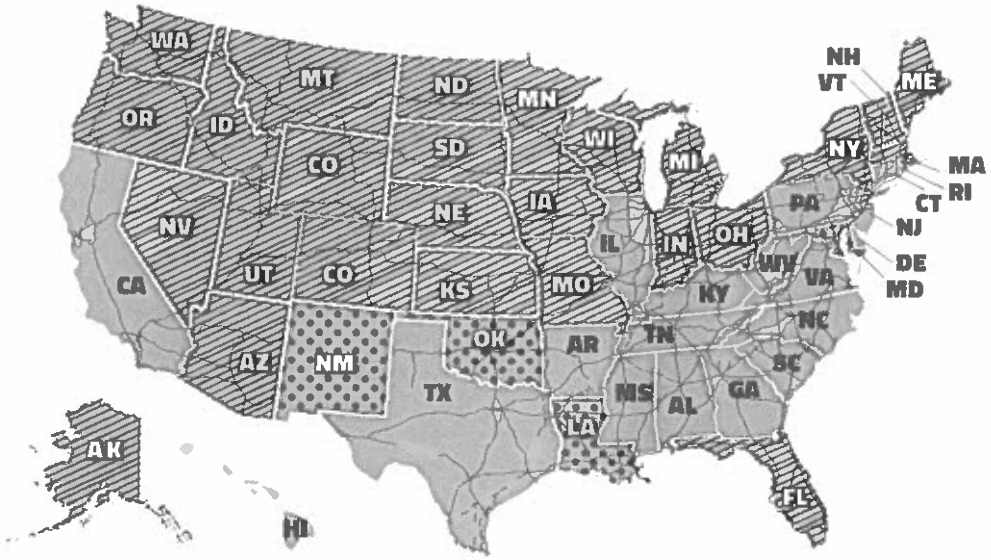
SAFER HAULING & INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

MAKE OUR ROADS SAFER

THE PROBLEM

- The weight limit for trucks on Interstate Highways is **80,000 lbs.**
- But all **50 states allow trucks carrying more to drive on local roads**—past schools, homes, and playgrounds[1].
- Trucks travel the country on these local routes, **creating safety issues,** contributing to **traffic and congestion,** burning more fuel and generating **more greenhouse gas.**[2]
- This 80,000 lbs. limit has been in place since 1982 despite **major advancements** in vehicle **safety** and **paving technology.**

It's time to bring trucking into the 21st century and allow states to raise their weight limits on Interstate Highways. Trucks perform better with a 6-axle, 91,000-lbs. configuration.



50 STATES

allow trucks above the 80,000 lbs. federal gross vehicle weight (GVW) limit on their roads through permits, pilot programs, or federal exemptions.[3]

MANY STATES ALLOW TRUCKS ABOVE 80,000 LBS. ON PORTIONS OF THEIR FEDERAL INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS AS WELL.

- STATES THAT ALLOW TRUCKS ABOVE GVW ON LOCAL AND STATE ROADS BY RIGHT OR PERMIT
- STATES THAT ALLOW TRUCKS ABOVE 91,000 LBS. ON PORTIONS OF INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS
- STATES THAT ALLOW TRUCKS ABOVE THE FEDERAL GVW UP TO 90,000 LBS. ON PORTIONS OF INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS.
- INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS

Modernizing the truck weight limit on Federal Interstate Highways will:

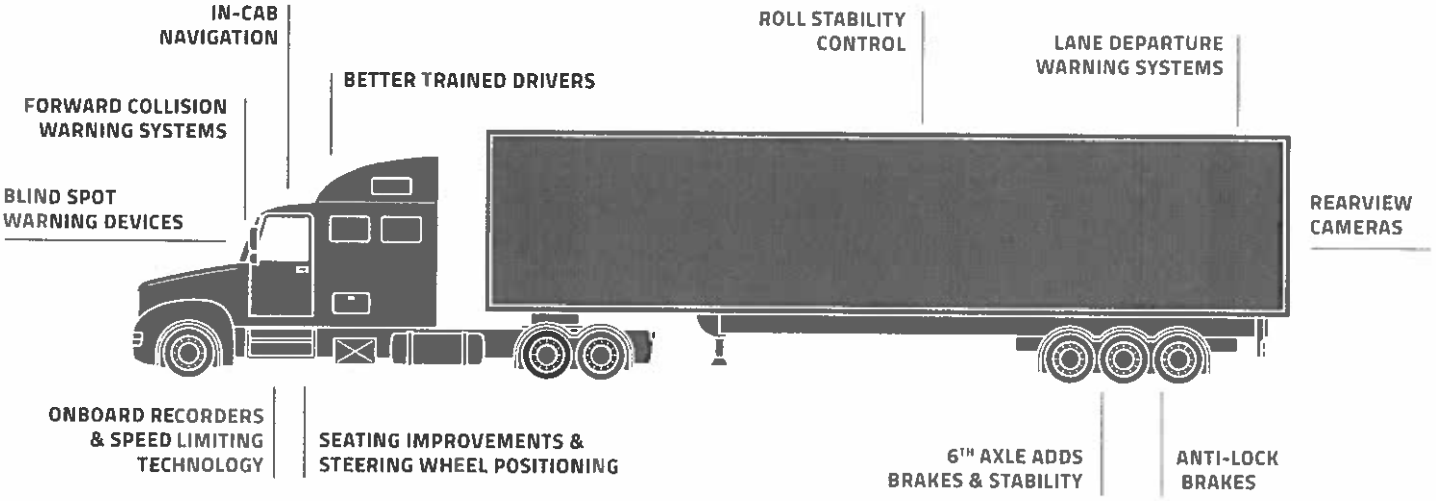
- Make roads safer for our families
- Minimize congestion on state and local roads
- Reduce infrastructure costs, saving taxpayer dollars
- Reduce fuel consumption and greenhouse gases emissions
- Create savings for American manufacturers that can be reinvested into our communities

[1] U.S. DOT "Compilation of Existing State Truck Size and Weight Laws" May 2015, pps. 18-206

[2] American Transportation Research Institute "Energy and Emissions Impacts of Operating Higher Productivity Vehicles Update 2008" March 2008

[3] U.S. DOT "Compilation of Existing State Truck Size and Weight Laws" May 2015, pps. 18-206

Current federal truck weight limits were set in 1982. Despite 30 years of advancements in paving and safety technology, our laws have not changed. It's time to modernize.



MYTH	FACT
Increasing the GVW limit will compromise safety.[1]	→ A ten year pilot in Idaho found there was no heightened safety risk. And the U.S. DOT concluded that the six-axle truck had better braking.[2,3]
Heavier trucks will damage roads and bridges, increase maintenance costs and create bigger federal deficits.[4]	→ The Minnesota Department of Transportation found that the addition of a sixth axle created a 37% reduction in road wear and an overall reduction in the number of trips needed to transport products.[5] → Modern trucks are also federal bridge formula compliant.[6]
Heavier trucks means bigger trucks.	→ Increasing the weight limit will not mean longer, higher or wider trucks—just more productive trucks. → A six-axle configuration has the same overall dimension as trucks currently traveling the Interstate carrying 80,000 lbs.[7]
Heavy trucks are energy hogs.[8]	→ According to two separate studies, modern trucks result in lower fuel costs and fewer greenhouse gas emissions. The average fuel savings was 1 to 2 gallons per trip and greenhouse gas emissions were estimated to decrease by as much as 11% per trip.[9]

[1] Coalition Against Bigger Trucks at http://www.cabt.org/about-us/

[2] http://www.capitalpress.com/Idaho/20150915/us-house-passes-idaho-truck-weight-bill

[3] US DOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study Technical Reports Vol. 2 "Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis Technical Report" June 2015, p. 65

[4] Coalition Against Bigger Trucks at http://www.cabt.org/about-us/

[5] Minnesota Department of Transportation "Minnesota Truck Size and Weight Project" June 2006, p.ES-3

[6] Interstate Highway Truck Weights- White Paper- Maine DOT September 20, 2010

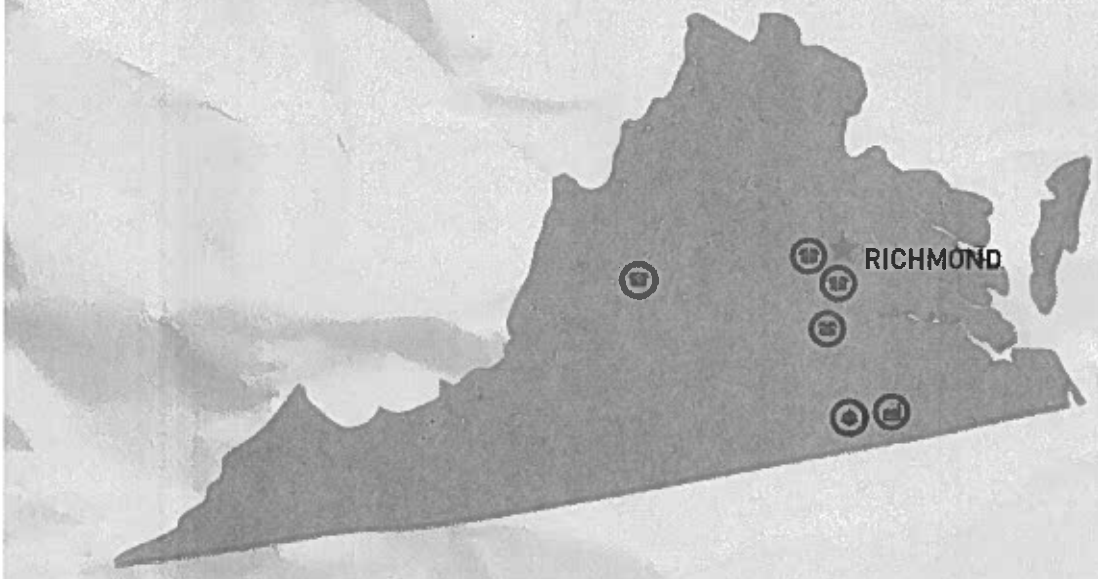
[7] http://www.overdriveonline.com/legislation-proposed-to-allow-91000-pound-trucks-on-u-s-highways/

[8] Valentine, Katie "Big Trucks Emit Huge Amounts of Carbon Every Year. The EPA Is About to Do Something About It." June 2, 2015.

[9] US DOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study Technical Reports, Vol. I "Technical Summary Report" June 2015 p. ES-11

VIRGINIA

INTERNATIONAL PAPER



LOCATIONS

- Industrial Packaging Plant: **4**
- Global Cellulose Fibers Mill: **1**
- Global Sourcing: **1**

PEOPLE

Employees are our greatest assets and advocates.

Employees
660

Sites in VA
5

Payroll, Taxes, & Benefits
$67 million

LOCAL INVESTMENT

We support and strengthen the communities where our employees live and work.

Capital Investment since 2014
$40.6 million

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Working together with our suppliers ensures quality products and services for our customers.

Total Supplier Spend **$128 million**

Minority & Women-Owned Business Suppliers
$4 million

Small & Medium-Sized Business Suppliers
$43 million

PRODUCTS & CUSTOMERS

Making products people depend on every day.

- Absorbent hygiene products
- Beverages
- Consumer & industrial goods
- eCommerce
- Shipping & distribution
- Paper product manufacturers

MEETING THE NEEDS OF GLOBAL CUSTOMERS

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Commonwealth of Virginia

Wandtke, Keith <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

input

Keith Dunagan <kdunagan@wytheco.org>
To: Keith.Wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov
Cc: Elizabeth Bolstad CABT <ebolstad@cabt.org>

Wed, Aug 8, 2018 at 3:35 PM

August 9, 2018

Keith R. Wandtke

Senior Policy Analyst

Governance and Legislative Affairs

Virginia Department of Transportation

Dear Mr. Wandtke,

As Sheriff of Wythe County, I am adamantly opposed to increasing the weight of tractor-trailers. From firsthand experience, I have seen far too many accidents in this region involving tractor-trailers at the current weight limit of 80,000 pounds and am not sure why anyone would think it would be a good idea to test out heavier trucks on Virginia roads. I ask that VDOT please take the motoring public's safety into consideration as you are finalizing a report to the General Assembly about the advisability of joining this heavier truck experiment.

As you know, Interstate 77 and 81are north–south highways along the U.S. Route 52 and route 11 corridors, serving Wythe County. Along I-77's 67-mile length in Virginia, it passes through the Big Walker Mountain Tunnel and East River Mountain Tunnel, the latter on the West Virginia state line. The southernmost 7 miles in our county involve a steep grade, up for northbound and down for southbound traffic. The southbound side has 2 runaway truck ramps, which tells you quite a bit about safety concerns in that area. I have been made aware of studies that show that truck weights over 80,000 pounds have an out of service brakes violation increase of 18 percent over trucks at or below 80,000 pounds. I definitely do not want to see 91,000 pound trucks with a more frequent braking violation rate on that stretch of I 77. I81 far exceeds the level of truck traffic it was designed to handle.

Combining the terrain in Wythe County along with our winter weather, or our frequent heavy rainfalls, then adding in 91,000 pound tractor trailers would create an untenable likelihood of accidents. And accidents involving heavier trucks will be more severe and more deadly. Please let me know if you have any questions for me.

Sincerely,

Keith Dunagan
Sheriff
Wythe County Sheriff's Office
245 South Fourth Street
Wytheville, VA 24382
Phone: 276-223-6099

Fax: 276-223-6127

Find us on Facebook

Commonwealth of Virginia

Wandtke, Keith <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

MillerCoors Truck Weight Pilot Program Comments

Marte, Rochelle <Rochelle.Marte@millercoors.com> Tue, Aug 21, 2018 at 9:54 AM
To: "keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov" <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>
Cc: "stan@heftywiley.com" <stan@heftywiley.com>, "Crawford, Richard" <Richard.Crawford@millercoors.com>, "Mason, Josh" <Joshua.Mason@millercoors.com>, "Maloney, Marty" <Martin.Maloney@millercoors.com>, "Stonebraker, John" <John.Stonebraker@millercoors.com>, "Scully Jr, Timothy" <timothy.scully@millercoors.com>

Keith,

Good morning. I hope this finds you well. Please find attached MillerCoors comments regarding a potential truck weight pilot.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback, and would be happy to answer any follow-up questions you may have. We look forward to continued participation at your upcoming meeting in September.

Best,

Rochelle Marte | Director, State Government Affairs – SE Region

Mobile: 404.433.4925

Office: 770.913.1030

Our Purpose: Delight the World's Beer Drinkers

MillerCoors

VDOT Final.docx
49K

MillerCoors
A MOLSON Coors COMPANY

250 S. Wacker, Suite 800
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3939 W. Highland Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53208

August 21, 2018

Mr. Keith Wandtke
Virginia Department of Transportation
Review of Enrollment in Federal Pilot Program/Project
VIA – E-Mail

Please find below our responses to the questions posed to the July 27th Stakeholder Working Group:

From your organization's perspective, what would you propose (and why) in response to the specific issues or implications to be considered by VDOT in determining whether or not to participate in a federal pilot authorizing six axle vehicles weighing 91,000 lbs. to operate on the interstates…

- The ability to operate vehicles up to 91,000 pounds GVW on six axles represents an opportunity for highway productivity improvement. The beer business is transportation-intensive and we strongly support the goal of higher and safer productivity in truck transportation. In that spirit, we actively worked with interested stakeholders during the 2018 legislative session to successfully pass legislation allowing the state to implement such a program. The federal pilot is modeled after the Maine and Vermont pilot programs that are now permanently authorized, and we recommend reaching out to their Transportation Departments for additional information on their implementations

- MillerCoors maintains a strong commitment to traffic safety, through a number of initiatives including the promotion of responsible use of our products, primary seat belt legislation and seeing through a variety of state and federal legislative actions on drunk driving. We also require our carriers to maintain the highest DOT safety rating possible and they must be EPA Smartway certified.

The fee structure for qualifying tractor trucks:

- This reform measure carefully balances productivity with regard for the condition of the infrastructure. As a result, we would recommend that VDOT impose a "reasonable fee" to manage the program similar to the existing over weight vehicle permit program.

- In addition, the use of more productive trucks allows VDOT to mitigate investments in pavement maintenance and rehabilitation, as well as capacity expansion. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released Technical Findings as part of its Truck

Size and Weight Study and the data confirmed the increased efficiency of the proposed pilot configuration. In fact, the USDOT found that its assumed wide use of the 91k/6 axle configuration would reduce life-cycle pavement costs and not cause any increase in one-time rehabilitation costs for Interstate System bridges.

The axle spacing for qualifying tractor trucks:

- We favor the requirement of a sixth axle to support 91,000lbs and the bridge formula compliant requirement assures proper axle spacing. The sixth-axle does not make the truck bigger or longer; it is the exact same size as the commonly used 5-axle, 53-foot truck.

Issues related to reasonable access from loading facilities onto a primary or secondary highway and interstate highways, the sufficiency of existing data in determining if certain routes and bridges should be excluded from the federal pilot program or project, and any other issues that should be considered by the Department:

- The pilot program does not reduce any general state and local authority over non-Interstate System roads. It is important to remember that reasonable access is a limited concept; it is access to and from the Interstate System "to terminals and facilities for food, fuel, repairs and rest,"(Sec 23 USC 127). It is not a general change in state weight laws or an authorization for through travel off the Interstate System.

- More than 90 percent of states allow trucks heavier than 80,000 pounds GVW to access some or all non-Interstate roadways, while federal regulations generally prohibit these heavier trucks from accessing the Interstates - the best built class of roads and the safest place for them to travel. In addition, many of the heavier trucks that are permitted on non-Interstate roads operate on only five axles, instead of the infrastructure friendly six axle configuration. Since the MillerCoors Shenandoah Brewery is approximately 15 miles from I-81, we recommend that VDOT/USDOT treat that facility as a terminal allowing reasonable access to I-81. We emphasize that if access to or from the Interstate at a particular point were to involve, say, a small bridge that could not handle even a bridge formula compliant vehicle, we understand that VDOT would want to require that access not utilize that bridge.

From your perspective, what are the advantages (positive impacts)/disadvantages (negative impacts) of increasing the maximum allowable load to 91,000 pounds? What information/data is available to support or quantify said advantages/disadvantages (impacts)?

- This policy change will enable MillerCoors to move the same amount of freight more efficiently using 16% fewer trucks, thereby reducing fuel consumption, CO2 emissions, and vehicle miles traveled, road wear and overall transportation costs. Similar truck

weight pilot programs in both Maine and Vermont were so successful in creating safer and more efficient highways that the Congress made the pilot authority permanent. If the six-axle 91,000 lbs. configuration were available for use, MillerCoors could increase the weight of the cargo on each truck from approximately 47,000 lbs. to 58,000 lbs. MillerCoors could sub sequentially transport the 160 thousand barrels of beer it ships each week on long distance Interstate Highway routes with 15-20% fewer trucks or 180 to 240 less trucks a week. This change would result in reduced road wear and overall transportation costs. Further, reduced VMT promotes safety and event if overall VMT should increase due to economic growth, the number of trucks needed to move the given amount of cargo would be lower than under the current allotment or system.

- We encourage the VDOT to examine the technical findings from the U.S. DOT's Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study which show positive performance for six-axle trucks traveling at both 91,000 and 97,000 pounds, while also confirming reduced logistics costs, pavement life-cycle costs, fuel costs, vehicle miles traveled, congestion and emissions as compared to the five-axle, 80,000 pound control vehicle. USDOT also found that the six-axle vehicle handled comparably and was able to brake one foot shorter than the 5 axle 80,000 pound counterpart, as the six axle vehicle has an additional set of brakes. USDOT also found that wide use of these vehicles (wider than anyone has proposed) would result in only a minimal level of modal shift from freight rail to trucks.

What actions would be needed to mitigate any potential negative impacts? What other changes would be required (enforcement, permitting, inspection, infrastructure design/maintenance, etc.?)

- VDOT would be free to examine their Interstate road networks and open routes where heavier, six-axle trucks could boost safety and efficiency while the sixth axle distributes weight more widely and reduces life-cycle pavement costs. The Maine and Vermont truck weight pilot programs have created safer and more efficient highways. Federal, state and local officials from both states, as well as the law enforcement community, are strong proponents of the permanent extension of the pilot programs that were granted by Congress. The pilot would give VDOT the critical opportunity to do what Maine and Vermont have done.

- VDOT should monitor the safety impact of heavier vehicles. VDOT should also have the authority to terminate the operation of these heavier vehicles on any route where engineering analysis suggests an unreasonable safety risk. This ensures safety without delaying productivity benefits. A key provision in the pilot would require VDOT to report to USDOT what the loaded weight was per vehicle at the time of a crash as this is safety data that the USDOT has said is lacking.

- If VDOT determines that the program delivers a negative impact, V-DOT could end participation from the pilot.

How should any potential pilot be evaluated? What criteria should be considered and what data will be required?

- Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom have gross vehicle weight limit for six-axle vehicles well above 91,000 pounds and fatal truck-related accident rates have declined when the same amount of freight can be moved in fewer trips. We encourage VDOT to look at the data from these three countries.

What steps should be taken to ensure safety, mobility, and states of good repair are maintained during a pilot project?

- See the evaluation criteria listed above. But for emphasis, the extra axle and bridge formula compliance address infrastructure concerns and the safety data collection requirement (reporting weight of vehicle at the time of a crash) is a safety evaluation tool.

Other Considerations?

- **Railroads:** Railroads are a key part of our transportation strategy. However, given our seven breweries and ten distribution centers that have access to our nation's interstate highway system through major metropolitan areas, the Class One railroads cannot service the majority of our freight demand. This notion that heavier weights are an opportunity to shift current rail cargo to trucks is simply not factual. We want to use more rails, but the Class One railroads are not able to provide the service needed. So, trucking improvements are needed. This pilot program would do that under carefully crafted conditions that would protect infrastructure and promote safety.

- **Congestion and driver shortage has become a crisis:** USDOT predicts truck freight increases over the next few years and road capacity already built out, which translates to significant congestion problems on I-81 unless VDOT and Congress address it now. At the same time, we are seeing increased drive demand are also experiencing acute driver shortages which have increased our logistical costs by 20%. This is an unanticipated cost thrust upon a business and can cause shifts in the way we approach our business operations impacting capital investment, innovation, marketing support and other items that may hinder the performance of our business. Our survival is dependent upon our ability to manage our supply chain, brew quality beers, keep costs manageable and hire the best available workers.

We believe increased truck productivity for our company, the domestic beer industry and other shippers is more important now than it has ever been, thereby enhancing work for our U.S. employees, beer distributors and American farmers. It can be achieved safely and while protecting the infrastructure, as we have explained.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Rochelle H. Marte
Sr. Director, Gov. Affairs
MillerCoors

Josh Mason
Sr. Manager Customer Service and Supply
MillerCoors

Commonwealth of Virginia

Wandtke, Keith <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Stakeholders Working Group: Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly (Review of Enrollment in Federal Pilot Program/Project)

Paxton, Kathryn <kathryn.paxton@vdacs.virginia.gov> Fri, Aug 10, 2018 at 11:25 AM
To: "Wandtke, Keith" <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Keith,

Attached are VDACS' responses to the questionnaire. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

Kathryn Paxton
Policy Analyst
Office of Policy, Planning, and Research
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
(804) 786-5175

[Quoted text hidden]

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Kathryn Paxton
Policy Analyst
Office of Policy, Planning, and Research
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
(804) 786-5175

11.VDOT Working Group.Chapters 553 and 554. 2018 Acts of Assembly.Review of Enrollment in Federal Pilot Program.8.2018.docx
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Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) Feedback
Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly, Review of Enrollment in Federal Pilot Program

1. From your organization's perspective, what would you propose (and why) in response to the specific issues or implications to be considered by VDOT in determining whether or not to participate in a federal pilot authorizing six axle vehicles weighing 91,000 lbs to operate on the interstates:
   - o the fee structure for qualifying tractor trucks,
   - o the axle spacing for qualifying tractor trucks,
   - o issues related to reasonable access from loading facilities onto a primary or secondary highway and interstate highways,
   - o the sufficiency of existing data in determining if certain routes and bridges should be excluded from the federal pilot program or project, and
   - o any other issues that should be considered by the Department

   VDACS appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback as part of the Working Group. However, VDACS does not have any expertise on tractor track fee structures, axle spacing, reasonable access, or the evaluation of data to determine the necessity of the exclusion of certain routes and bridges and is unable to provide specific recommendations on these topics.

2. From your perspective, what are the advantages (positive impacts)/disadvantages (negative impacts) of increasing the maximum allowable load to 91,000 pounds? What information/data is available to support or quantify said advantages/disadvantages (impacts)?

   Increasing changes in the Virginia agriculture industry and pressure from residential development continue to present transportation challenges for Virginia farmers. The increase of the maximum allowable load may provide more efficient means for agricultural producers to transport their products to market, which may in turn reduce transportation costs. VDACS does not have any data available that would quantify this advantage.

3. What actions would be needed to mitigate any potential negative impacts? What other changes would be required (enforcement, permitting, inspection, infrastructure design/maintenance, etc,?)

   VDACS is not able to determine what potential negative impacts may result from participation in the pilot and, therefore, is unable to provide any recommendations regarding what actions would be needed to mitigate such impacts.

4. How should any potential pilot be evaluated? What criteria should be considered and what data will be required?

   VDACS supports the continued solicitation of feedback through the working group to ensure that stakeholders are given an opportunity to raise concerns and express support or opposition to participation in the pilot.

5. What steps should be taken to ensure safety, mobility, and state of good repair are maintained during a pilot project?

VDACS does not have any expertise on these topics and is therefore not able to provide any recommendations regarding what steps should be taken to ensure safety, mobility, and state of good repair.

6. Other concerns/considerations?

   None at this time.

Commonwealth of Virginia

Wandtke, Keith <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Federal pilot Program

Chris Lagow <chris@lagowlobby.com>
To: "Keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov" <Keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Fri, Aug 10, 2018 at 12:48 PM

Keith, please see the attached Comments I am filing as the property casualty insurance representative to the stakeholder study. I am conflicted for the next meeting and would appreciate you sending me any handouts or copies of the other written comments you receive. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Chris LaGow

Heavy Trucks.docx
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Dear Keith:

On behalf of my property/casualty (P&C) insurance clients, I am pleased to provide you with these written Comments to the proposed Enrollment in a potential Federal Pilot Program to allow six axle, 91,000 pound trucks on Virginia's interstate highways. My focus will be on the negative impacts to public safety that would occur if Virginia goes down this path.

As stated at the first stakeholder meeting, the P&C industry is generally opposed to any study that might lead to an increase in allowable weight being transported by commercial motor vehicles (CMV's), and regardless of the vehicle's configurations. Their concerns revolve around the transportation safety aspects of this proposal.

Since 1982, when Congress mandated that the maximum weight limit for trucks would be 80,000 pounds (GVW), the number of truck registrations has increased by 90%. Some proponents of this study have suggested that raising the weight limit to 91,000 pounds would reduce the number of trucks on our highways, making travel safer. The history of truck registrations and truck miles travelled suggests otherwise.

When the Congress mandated the 80,000 pound limit in 1982, the number of "Truck Miles Travelled in Millions" was 111,423, per the December, 2017 posting on IIHS. By 2016, that number stood at 287,895. A footnote to this data stated that, "The method of estimating truck miles travelled was changed beginning in 2007, and these results are not comparable to those of past years." However, truck registrations increased by 90% between 1982 and 2015, so the number of truck miles travelled has certainly increased substantially.

Research and experience show that allowing bigger, heavier trucks will not result in few trucks using the highways.

In June, 2015, the USDOT released a study on truck size and weight and concluded there was a "profound" lack of data from which to quantify the safety impact of bigger and heavier trucks and recommended that no changes in the relevant truck size and weight laws and regulations be considered until these data limitations were overcome.

The lack of crash data that is relevant to the question of whether 91,000 pound six axle trucks should be allowed on our roads is critical to this effort. Anyone analyzing this issue will be faced with qualitative data problems, the most pertinent of which is that the actual weight data of the truck involved in an accident is not captured in the state truck crash reports. The data does not distinguish between an empty tractor trailer and one fully loaded.

Mention was made at the first stakeholder meeting about the Idaho DOT 10 Year Pilot involving trucks up to 129,000 pounds. As far as safety implications are concerned, the report on page 8 states that, "Pilot program truck crashes were not able to be tracked separately from commercial vehicle crashes." This only underscores what was found in the 2016 USDOT study about the profound lack of qualitative and quantitative data from which to draw any national conclusions. Specifically, Idaho could not ascertain vehicle weights at the time of any crash so that data was not part of any accident report. It is really not surprising that Idaho "did not observe any significant effect of the 129,000 pound pilot project trucks on . . . or safety," (Page 13) since they had no crash data upon which to make an observation.

Returning to the USDOT study, which was forced to look at only Washington state crash data due to the lack of comparable data in other states, they did find that the crash rates for the six axle configuration were found to be "significantly higher" than the crash rates of five axle trucks. The USDOT found that the six axle heavier trucks had anywhere from 47% to 400% higher crash rates.

In the 2016 study, the USDOT found that trucks weighing more than 80,000 pounds had higher overall Out of Service rates, and 18% higher brake violation rates compared to those carrying 80,000 pounds or less. Trucks with any out of service violations were found to be 362% more likely to be involved in a crash per the 2016 study published by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). The 2016 IIHS study concluded that, "Defects on 40 ton vehicles are a serious threat to highway safety." If they had been studying 45.5 ton vehicles, would the conclusion be any different?

The results of the 2016 IIHS study bolstered what was already known about large truck crash risks, so it begs the question: Why re-study in a federal pilot project what is already well understood?

Motor Vehicle Crash Stats:

Crash frequency and crash severity are the two leading factors affecting insurance premiums. Severity is determined by the velocity and mass of a vehicle. If the mass increases and velocity stays the same, crash severity is likely to go up, and with it the seriousness of injuries.

Each year, societal costs for all motor vehicle crashes are estimated at more than $800 billion. Fatalities are up 12% in the last two years for which data is available.

Over 100 per day are killed across the United States, and over 6,500/day are injured in motor vehicle crashes of all types.

In 2016, 4,317 were killed in accidents involving large trucks; an increase of 5.4% from 2015, and an increase of 28% since 2009. That's the equivalent of an airliner going down every other week.

Injuries from accidents involving large trucks topped 116,000 in 2015, a 57% increase since 2009.

The cost to society is estimated to be $118 billion in 2015, for crashes involving large trucks.

In fatal car/truck collisions, 97% of the fatalities were in the passenger vehicle.

In 2016, 67% of the fatal accidents involving large trucks occurred on primary and secondary roads, while 32% occurred on interstates and freeways. These larger trucks are not going to be loading and unloading on the interstates.

81% of fatal crashes involving large trucks are multiple vehicle crashes, per the 2016 Traffic Safety Facts published by the USDOT.

The laws limiting truck weights can certainly by amended, but the laws of physics cannot be. A body in motion will stay in motion, and a heavier body striking another body at the same speed as a lighter body, will result in greater crash severity, just due to the increased mass. This leads to more serious injuries, and likely results in more fatalities. This inevitably leads to higher insurance premiums. No one should be thinking this will lead to less congestion on the highways, with fewer trucks. History tells us otherwise.

Whatever the marginal benefit might be for loading up a six axle truck to 91,000 pounds to gain a "one foot (1') shorter braking distance," it cannot be worth the increased safety risk to all the vehicles on the road – including other trucks.

Can the proponents of this pilot tell us safety minded stakeholders that if we see the image of a six axle 91,000 pound truck riding on our bumper coming down the hill on I-81 that we should be comforted by the alleged efficiencies gained in the transport of various goods? Would you put your spouse and children in that vehicle to test your convictions?

The data on heavy truck crashes is sparse and that is not likely to improve anytime soon, but it is not favorable to the proponents. I trust that VDOT will draw similar conclusions and decline to participate in any federal pilot program.

Very truly yours,

J. Christopher LaGow

Commonwealth of Virginia

Wandtke, Keith <keith.wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov>

Tractor-Trailers on Virginia Highways

Richard Randolph <neurologicalhope@gmail.com> Wed, Aug 8, 2018 at 6:40 AM
To: Keith.Wandtke@vdot.virginia.gov

Good morning, Keith.
Please find attached my comments about the General Assembly's directive that VDOT study the implications of Virginia's participation in a pilot project to permit 91,000 pound trucks on Virginia's highways.
With best regards,
Rick

--
Rick Randolph
Supervisor, Albemarle County
Scottsville Magisterial District
Cell: (434) 284-1812
Office: 434-296-5843
Facebook: Randolph for Scottsville District

Trucks.docx
125K

August 8, 2018

Keith R. Wandtke
Senior Policy Analyst
Governance and Legislative Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation

Dear Mr. Wandtke,

I understand VDOT is studying the potential of participating in a 91,000- pound pilot project to allow heavier trucks traveling our roads here in Virginia. I believe it would be unwise to participate in any such pilot program. As a Supervisor of Albemarle County representing the Scottsville district, I am writing to ask that you do not recommend that our state participate in such a pilot program.

Most likely you have recently traveled on interstates 64 and 81, winding around the Piedmont and mountains through Albemarle County and noticed the amount of truck traffic. I-81 is known as one of the most dangerous interstates in the state and is popular among truckers because it is a north-south alternative to I-95 that avoids tolls and bypasses traffic around major cities. We have far too many motorists, including students at our many universities, traveling these interstates to be experimenting with heavier, more dangerous trucks on these crowded roads.

Not only is this a safety a concern. Our highways and bridges are declining faster than we can repair, replace or upgrade them. There are 9,101 bridges in Virginia in fair/poor condition, according to 2017 FHWA data--that is over 65 percent of all bridges across the Commonwealth. If trucks are allowed to become any heavier they will accelerate the deterioration of our roads and bridges and will put further pressure on federal, state and local governments, and our taxpayers, to find funds to repair these essential roadways.

Local roads and bridges are far too often overlooked when considering the negative impact of heavier trucks. Any heavier trucks allowed on our Interstates would mean additional heavier trucks that ultimately find their way onto our local infrastructure which is much more vulnerable than our interstates.

I do not understand why anyone would think it is wise to experiment on citizens of the Commonwealth by allowing heavier trucks that are more dangerous to drivers and more destructive to our roadways and bridges. In conclusion, I hope that VDOT takes these comments into consideration when compiling your report recommendations.

Sincerely,

Rick Randolph

Scottsville Magisterial District Supervisor, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors