

FMCSA to Reconsider Current HOS Regulations

On October 26, 2009, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) entered into a settlement with Public Citizen, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and other advocacy groups in an effort to resolve a lawsuit by these organizations challenging FMCSA's current hours-of-service rule.

Under the terms of the settlement, FMCSA has nine months to review its current rule and submit a notice of proposed rulemaking on this issue to the White House, and up to 21 months to issue a final rule to replace the current one. Until that time, the current rule remains in effect.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said he believes that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) can help save lives by starting over to develop a new rule.

As the American Trucking Associations (ATA) has communicated for the last five years, the HOS regulations, as they are currently constructed, are good safety rules. They are working and the proof is in the industry's safety performance since they took effect in 2004.

"Safety in the trucking industry has greatly improved while operating under the current hours-of-service rules," said ATA President and CEO Bill Graves. "Over the past five years we've seen a strong decline in truck-involved crashes on our nation's highways."

Figures from the DOT clearly demonstrate that the trucking industry is now the safest it has been since the DOT began keeping crash statistics in 1975. The number of truck-involved fatalities on our highways has *decreased* by 19 percent since the new HOS rules took effect. The number of injuries has *decreased* by 13 percent since 2004. These substantial safety improvements came at a time when the number of registered large trucks operating on our highways increased by hundreds of thousands of trucks and the number of miles driven by large trucks increased by more than 2 billion miles.

ATA looks forward to participating in the upcoming rulemaking process to further demonstrate how the current safety-based HOS rules are working and why they should be maintained.