



## MORE PRODUCTIVE TRUCKS: DELIVERING AMERICA SAFER, CLEANER AND CHEAPER

### Summary

Allowing for the expanded use of more productive trucks would **improve** highway safety, **reduce** state maintenance costs, **cut** carbon emissions and fuel use and **save** consumers and shippers money by reducing the cost of transportation.

### **Saving Lives**

There are dozens of studies demonstrating that allowing more productive trucks through reform of federal size and weight regulations will reduce the risk of truck-involved crashes, both by reducing the number of trucks on the road and by shifting trucks to highways better equipped to handle them.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) found that the accident rate for longer-combination vehicles (LCVs) is nearly half what it is for standard tractor trailers. Studies from Canada, where LCVs are widely used, have found that the accident rate for LCVs is five-times lower than the rate for conventional trucks.



Canadian studies have also found that in the 10 years since LCVs came into wide use, truck registrations fell 19%, while overall vehicle registrations rose 23%, and concluded that increased productivity was responsible for reducing the number of

trucks on the road.

FHWA research supports this conclusion. The agency found that if LCV regulations in the western United States were simply harmonized, truck miles driven would fall 25.5%. Applied to statistics on highway fatalities, harmonization would have saved 140 lives in 2008.

Furthermore, FHWA concluded that allowing heavier trucks nationwide would reduce truck miles traveled by 11%, preventing 500 fatalities annually.

Allowing heavier trucks on Interstate highways will also divert them away from secondary roads, preventing even more crashes. A study in Maine, where heavier trucks are allowed on state roads, but not on most Interstates, found that the fatality rate on secondary roads is 10 times higher than it is for the Interstate system.

### **Saving Infrastructure**

Good stuff.





Increasing truck weights, while maintaining axle weights (i.e. the amount of weight diffused by each axle) by adding axles, can reduce pavement maintenance costs for state, local and federal governments.

The U.S. Department of Transportation found that increasing truck weights nationwide would save taxpayers \$2.5 billion over 20 years in pavement maintenance costs, and expanding the use of longer combination vehicles would save another \$400 million over that same time frame.

A Wisconsin Department of Transportation study found that allowing six-axle trucks with a gross weight of 98,000 pounds would save the state more than \$10 million a year in highway repair costs.

While increasing truck weights can accelerate the deterioration of bridges, these impacts can be minimized by good management, and the costs are likely to be dwarfed by pavement, safety, environmental, congestion and shipping cost savings.

### **Saving the Environment**

There are a variety of studies that clearly show that increasing truck productivity will cut fuel usage, and subsequently reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

A report by the American Transportation Research Institute found that increasing truck productivity could reduce fuel usage by as much as 38%. A six-axle, 97,000-pound single trailer truck gets 17% more ton-miles per gallon than its 80,000-pound, five-axle cousin, and a turnpike double (a single tractor pulling two 48-foot trailers) improved mileage by between 33% and 38%.

Those findings are corroborated by both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Transportation, who have separately pointed to



increasing truck productivity as an effective strategy to reduce fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Saving Money**

The U.S. Department of Transportation found that allowing heavier trucks nationwide would cut transportation costs by 7%, and expanding the use of LCVs would provide savings of 11%.

Good stuff.





In addition, a Federal Highway Administration study found that using LCVs in a truckload operation could cut a shipper's logistics costs by between 13% and 32%.

Dollars not spent on transportation can be taken out of the price of goods that U.S. consumers pay for, making improved trucking productivity a win-win for shippers and consumers.

Furthermore, because the U.S. has the lowest truck weight limits of industrialized countries, increasing our business productivity through size and weight reform will make domestic industries more competitive, keeping American jobs at home.

### **Saving Common Sense**

The biggest opponents of more productive trucks are the small cartel of freight railroad companies and their surrogates that claim more productive trucks will somehow divert rail freight. Trucking and railroads compete directly for only about 10% of the U.S. freight market, and studies have shown that even if small shifts occur, truck miles traveled will still be reduced.

Further, recent "studies" put forward by these groups purport to show a massive diversion in freight in some areas, but what they fail to highlight is that that shift only occurs if railroads don't reduce their rates and cut into their soaring profits.

We consider the freight railroads' opposition particularly disingenuous given the fact that trucking companies are now among the freight railroads' largest customers.

The railroads and their surrogates, including Astroturf groups like the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, also claim that trucking doesn't pay enough for its use of public roads and increasing our productivity will exacerbate this problem. The trucking industry pays around \$40 billion in federal and state highway use fees and is willing to contribute more, through a diesel tax increase, for better roads. Railroads, on the other hand, pay no fees and have for decades received government subsidies, including from the very funds that trucks pay into.

The trucking industry believes that any additional costs incurred as a result of size or weight increases should be fully compensated for with higher registration, permit or other appropriate fees.



Good stuff.

