



Parents Against Tired Truckers and Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

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**For Immediate Release**

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**SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION URGES OREGON  
CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO BACK BILL TO STOP TRUCK SIZE  
AND WEIGHT INCREASE.**

**Oregon residents urged to join [StopBiggerTrucks.org](http://StopBiggerTrucks.org) campaign**

SALEM, OR (July 15, 2009) – An alliance of health, safety and environmental groups today called on Oregon’s congressional delegation to back pending federal legislation to stop trucking and shipping industry efforts to increase truck size and weight limits on the nation’s highways.

The bipartisan bill (H.R. 1618 and S. 779) known as the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act (SHIPA) would freeze the current limit of 80,000 pounds and 53 feet maximum length for tractor trailers on interstate highways and the National Highway System (NHS) to improve safety and prevent excessive damage to the nation’s roads, tunnels and bridges. The NHS covers about 160,000 miles of highway while interstates represent 44,000 miles.

The SHIPA Act, which has won the support of over 100 cosponsors, including Oregon Congressman David Wu (D-District 1), also would retain the 1991 federal freeze on states that allow longer combination vehicles (LCV), such as triple-trailer trucks and turnpike doubles.

The American Trucking Associations and some shipping organizations are lobbying Congress to pass competing legislation that would dramatically increase truck weight limits up to 97,000 pounds.

The Oregon truck safety alliance is comprised of the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates, the BikeLane Coalition, the Brain Injury Association of Oregon, Environment Oregon, the Sierra Club, Teamsters Local 206, and the Truck Safety Coalition.

In its letter delivered to Oregon’s Congressional delegation, the coalition urged them to cosponsor H.R. 1618 and S. 779 because bigger and heavier trucks are less safe and inflict more costly damage to roads and bridges.

The coalition warned that 299 people died in truck crashes on Oregon's roads between 2003 and 2007. Nationally, about 5,000 people die in truck crashes each year and over 100,000 are injured. Large trucks, which represent 9 percent of all vehicles involved in fatal crashes, are responsible for 12 percent of all crash fatalities but make up only 3 percent of all registered vehicles.

Big trucks also pose threats to America's roads, bridges and other infrastructure. According to the America Society of Civil Engineers latest infrastructure report card, 25 percent of Oregon's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete and 18 percent of the state's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition. Nationally, 161,892 of the nation's 600,905 bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. It is estimated that one 110,000-pound triple trailer truck causes as much road and bridge damage as 13,981 mini-vans.

The coalition cautioned that allowing bigger trucks would dramatically increase heavy truck fuel consumption and produce much higher emissions at a time when Congress is seeking to reduce the U.S. reliance on carbon-based fuels and to address global warming. Within transportation, truck freight represents the fastest growing mode of pollution producing more than 220 million tons of carbon dioxide each year. Trucks with heavier gross weights require larger engines that decrease fuel economy on a miles-per-gallon basis according to the Western Uniformity Scenario Analysis.

"Enacting the SHIPA Act would save lives and prevent injuries, limit damage to our crumbling roads and bridges, reduce global warming pollution and curb our dependence on oil, and help achieve a balanced multi-modal transportation system," the Oregon coalition letter stated. "We urge you to support this sound and sensible legislation and look forward to working with you to build a safer, cleaner and more efficient transportation future for our nation."

The Truck Safety Coalition has launched a nationwide web-based petition drive at [www.stopbiggertrucks.org](http://www.stopbiggertrucks.org) to encourage citizens to tell members of Congress to put public safety first by supporting and enacting the SHIPA Act.

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