



Betty Karnette

Assembly Member • 54th Assembly District

NewsRelease

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Senate Panel to Consider Karnette Truck Safety Resolution

Sacramento – Assembly Joint Resolution 52, authored by Assembly Member Karnette (D – Long Beach), has been referred to the Senate Committee on Transportation & Housing. AJR 52 would urge the President and Congress to maintain the federal truck size and weight limits based on concerns about the impact of heavy trucks on highways, bridges and safety. This measure has received strong bipartisan support, evidenced by its approval by the California State Assembly on a 62-12 vote.

“Increasing truck and length limits will have a negative impact on California roads and bridges,” said Karnette. “The state has 13,000 bridges that are over 40 years old U.S. officials tell us that 3,150 of our state bridges are structurally deficient. State bridges were designed and built when there were fewer, much lighter trucks on the road. Increasing truck size and weight would require that many bridges in the state be replaced or reinforced.”

Longer combination vehicles (LCVs), defined as long double and triple trailer trucks (triples) with a gross vehicle weight that exceeds 80,000 pounds, would have a negative impact on all California roads; heavier trucks deteriorate pavement and infrastructure at an accelerated rate. The effect of allowing LCVs in California will put the safety of motorists at risk and ultimately impose additional costs on the state and taxpayers.

“The State of California has the obligation to protect the safety of motorists on its highways and to protect taxpayers’ investment in the highway infrastructure,” said Karnette. Previous state resolutions have emphasized safety concerns with bigger trucks. The 2007 collapse of the I-35W bridge in Minnesota has focused national attention on the impact of heavy trucks on highway infrastructure – especially bridges.

Federal law limits the gross vehicle weight of trucks operating on the Interstate Highways to 80,000 pounds. California applies the same weight limit. However, the American Trucking Associations (ATA) and other groups have indicated that they will ask Congress to remove the freeze on LCVs as part of the reauthorization of the federal highway bill (SAFETEA-LU), which will be considered by Congress in 2008 and 2009. In addition, a bill (S. 875) has been introduced in Congress to raise the federal weight limit from 80,000 pounds to 97,000 pounds on all interstate highways.

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