



September 10, 2015

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

We are writing to you to express our support for the Safe, Flexible, and Efficient Trucking Act being introduced by Rep. Reid Ribble. This important legislation, also known as the Safe Trucking Act, would give states the option to increase their truck weight maximums on Interstate highways to 91,000 lbs., provided the trucks include sixth axle safety technology.

Together, our organizations represent the vast majority of the milk produced and processed in the United States. Raw milk and processed dairy products are heavy, and thus represent one of the largest costs to our cooperatives and dairy companies that move and process milk. The majority of our members ship their nutrient-rich products across state lines, and the current patchwork of higher and lower maximum weights forces them to transport partially empty loads of milk or dairy products. This requires more fuel, creates more congestion and increases the costs of maintaining roads. Common sense changes like those included in the Safe Trucking Act will help keep the U.S. dairy industry growing, creating more jobs, and returning more money to farmers in their milk checks.

While we support a truck weight increase to 97,000 lbs., we believe the 91,000 lbs. weight limit proposed in this legislation is a pragmatic and responsible compromise that would align with the current federal bridge formula. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study recently concluded that increasing truck weight limits to 91,000 lbs. would reduce pavement costs, truck miles traveled, fuel costs and carbon dioxide emissions, all while maintaining braking and turning capacity. Freight tonnage is projected to increase 25 percent in the next decade (just over two percent per year), while the U.S. DOT reported less than one percent of modal shift from rail to truck by switching to 91,000 lbs.

Please support this common-sense legislation that is good for taxpayers, consumers, farmers, businesses, highway safety, and the environment.

Sincerely,

Jim Mulhern
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Milk Producers Federation

Connie Tipton
President and Chief Executive Officer
International Dairy Foods Association