



With over 600,000 of our 1.4 million members using the nation's highways as their workplace, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters is vitally concerned about protecting their safety. As a result, the Teamsters Union strongly opposes any increase in truck size and weight, especially an effort by a segment of the trucking industry to increase current 28 foot double trailers to 33 feet. If Congress enacts this provision, it would preempt state laws and force 39 states (AL, AK, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, GA, HI, IL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MO, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI) that currently do not allow them to run these twin 33-foot trailers.

### **A DRIVER'S PERSPECTIVE**

Teamster members currently drive 28 foot double trailers. And while for the most part they operate them safely, longer combination vehicles require special attention to their unique driving characteristics. Increasing 28 foot doubles to 33 feet would extend the length at least another 10 feet, making the configuration at least 84 feet long.

- Our highways, especially our merge lanes and on-and-off ramps are not designed for these eighty-four feet configurations. Scuff marks on the jersey walls now are evidence that even maneuvering 53 foot trailers on and off our interstates is a challenge.
- Merge lanes are not long enough for longer heavier trucks to get up to speed with on-coming traffic.
- Longer trucks mean greater stopping distances, and our over-congested highways leave little room for driver reaction times when it comes to changing lanes and reducing speed.

### **INCREASING LENGTH DOESN'T TRANSLATE TO FEWER TRUCKS**

- Proponents of heavier longer trucks say that increasing lengths and weights will mean fewer trucks on our highways. That's just not true. Historically, every time there has been an increase in *truck* size and weight, truck traffic increases.
- When you can put more freight on a truck, it becomes cheaper to ship by truck than by rail and freight gets diverted. It's simple economics.

### **DOT'S OWN CONGRESSIONALLY MANDATED STUDY SUPPORTS NO INCREASE**

- DOT is conducting a Congressionally-mandated Truck Size and Weight Study, whose initial findings recommend no increase in truck size and weight, because the data isn't there to make an informed decision.
- The study also cited safety concerns with stability and maneuverability of double trailers.
- Longer trailers are more difficult to drive in adverse weather conditions, and are subject to swaying into other lanes, especially in high winds.

## **LONGER TRUCKS PRESENT CHALLENGES TO TRUCK DRIVERS AND MOTORISTS**

- Truck drivers are challenged now to keep track of motorists with whom they share the road.
- Increasing a trailer combination by at least another 10 feet makes passing by automobiles more difficult and increases the blind spot area for the truck driver.
- Longer double trailer trucks pose an even greater danger of increasing severe crashes as travel on local roads to make deliveries or enter and exit highways to offload.
- These secondary roads often have winding paths and narrower lanes, limited sight distances, inadequate areas to pull over, and trees and other obstructions close to the highway.

## **CONGRESS NEEDS TO WAIT FOR RESULTS OF ITS OWN STUDY**

- MAP-21, which was passed with strong bi-partisan support, directed the DOT to conduct a comprehensive two-year truck size and weight study to provide data on crash frequency and the impact of large trucks on safety and infrastructure.
- The DOT recently released their technical report from the size and weight study and stated that because of severe data limitations “no changes in the relevant truck size and weight laws and regulations should be considered.”
- No truck size increases should be considered or adopted while the Congressionally-mandated study is underway, especially in light of early indications revealing the lack of any such data that would support such an increase.

## **THE PUBLIC HAS SPOKEN – AMERICANS DON’T WANT BIGGER TRUCKS**

- Public opinion polls are clear and consistent – Americans strongly oppose bigger trucks.
- The Teamsters Union has joined truck crash victims and survivors; Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety; the Truck Safety Coalition; Parents Against Tired Truckers; Citizens for Reliable and Safety Highways; Consumer Federation of America; The John Lindsay Foundation; the Trauma Foundation; KidsAndCars.org; and the Center for Auto Safety in opposing any increase in current limits on truck size and weight.