

April 28, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Chair
Environment & Public Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Environment & Public Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation &
Infrastructure
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation &
Infrastructure
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Cruz, Capito, and Graves, and Ranking Members Cantwell, Whitehouse, and Larsen:

On behalf of millions of Americans, the undersigned organizations urge you to protect U.S. infrastructure and roadway safety by maintaining the maximum cap of 80,000 pounds in Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) per motor vehicle on federal interstates. By opposing GVW increases in any surface transportation reauthorization bill, Congress can protect taxpayers, drivers, and pedestrians.

Highways were not built to sustain trucks beyond the current size specified by Congress. There is a significant link between large trucks and roadway damage, with a government report finding that an 80,000 pound big rig inflicts as much road damage as 9,600 passenger vehicles.¹ It is little wonder, then, that every 1 percent increase in overweight trucks results in a 1.8 percent reduction in pavement surface life.² Federal, state, and local taxpayers already spend half a trillion dollars per year on transportation,³ and more overweight trucks on the road would require more government spending.

¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Truck Weight and Its Effect on Highways* (July 23, 1979), <https://www.gao.gov/products/109954>.

² Wang, H., Al-Qadi, I. L., Ozer, H., et al., "Impact of Overweight Traffic on Pavement Life Using Weigh-in-Motion Data," *International Conference on Managing Pavement Assets*, 2015, <https://www.vtti.vt.edu/PDFs/icmpa9/session6/Wang.pdf>.

³ U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, "Transportation Public Finance Statistics," <https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/Transportation-Economic-Trends-Government-Transpor/hjpc-j5px/>.

Local infrastructure, which is closely integrated into highways, would inevitably bear the brunt of changes to interstate rules. According to a 2025 analysis produced by county road officials in Alabama, Illinois, Iowa, and Texas, more than 68,000 local bridges nationwide “do not have sufficient weight ratings to safely accommodate 91,000-pound trucks.”⁴ States and localities will be caught completely unprepared for federal changes to interstate weight limits, and taxpayers would need to pay \$78.7 billion just to get local bridges up to the standard needed to carry the 91,000 pound configuration.

Additionally, increasing size and weight limits could exacerbate the nation’s traffic safety crisis. Traffic crashes cost American society approximately \$428 billion per year, including \$37 billion in additional taxpayer spending annually.⁵ In 2024, crashes involving large trucks resulted in 5,340 fatalities.⁶

Larger, heavier trucks pose a substantial safety risk. A study by the Department of Transportation found that larger and longer freight trucks were more prone to crashes.⁷ Heavier trucks, including those with multiple trailers, were more difficult to maneuver and required longer stopping distances.⁸ Further, the heavier the truck, the greater the crash forces, increasing the lethality of crashes. A 2020 analysis appearing in the journal *Regional Science and Urban Economics* used weigh-in-motion traffic sensor data (comprising 3.5 billion datapoints) from 34 states to determine the impact of truck weight and vehicle collision incidence and severity.⁹ According to the data, a 1 percent increase in cargo weight (about 300 pounds) increases the likelihood that a crash is fatal by 0.27 percent.

Maintaining the existing 80,000-pound GVW limit is a prudent, evidence-based safeguard for both public safety and the long-term integrity of the interstate system. Raising the cap would accelerate pavement deterioration, shift billions of dollars in additional repair and reconstruction costs onto consumers and taxpayers, and expose motorists and first responders to heightened risk without delivering commensurate public benefits. At a time when federal and state governments are already struggling to maintain aging infrastructure, Congress should avoid compounding these challenges.

⁴ Rick Bailey et al., “The Impacts of Heavier Trucks on Local Bridges: 2025 Update.”

⁵ U.S. Dept. of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Admin., “The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019,” <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.

⁶ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, “Overview of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes In 2024,” April, 2026, <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813791>.

⁷ U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Federal Highway Admin., “Report to Congress: Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study,” <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/sw/map21tswstudy/ctsw/CTSLWS%20Report%20to%20Congress%20FINAL.pdf>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Nehiba, Cody. "Taxed to death? Freight truck collision externalities and diesel taxes." *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 85 (2020), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0166046220302623>.

We therefore urge you to reject any proposal to increase truck size and weight limits, and to reaffirm your commitment to protecting America's roads, communities, and taxpayers.

Signed,

Taxpayers Protection Alliance

AAA

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

American Consumer Institute

American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA)

Center for Auto Safety

Center for Transportation Advancement

Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

Coalition Against Bigger Trucks

Consumer Action for a Strong Economy

Consumer Federation of America

Institute for Policy Innovation

Institute for Safer Trucking

International Brotherhood of Teamsters

National Consumers League

National Association of Counties

National Association of County Engineers

NATSO, Representing America's Travel Centers and Truck Stops

National League of Cities

Parents Against Tired Truckers

Public Citizen

Railway Supply Institute

Road Safe America

SMART Transportation Division

Towing and Recovery Association of America Inc.

Truck Safety Coalition

Truckload Carriers Association