H.R. 3372- Gross Vehicle Weight Limit State Opt-In Pilot Program

Overview

- The SHIP Act would create a state opt-in pilot program that would increase gross vehicle weight (GVW) limits to up to 91,000-pounds on 6 axles on the Federal Interstate system.
    - Current weight limits are 80,000-pounds on 5 axles, which has been the case since 1982 despite major advancements in vehicle safety and paving technology.
    - To varying degrees, 50 states allow trucks carrying more than 80,000-pounds to drive on state and local roads.[1] 30 states allow trucks carrying more than 80,000 Ibs. on their Interstate Highways, in some capacity , and their communities are safer because of it.[2]

- This is not a 50-state mandate, but rather a state opt-in pilot program.

- This proposal does not mean longer, higher, or wider trucks- just more productive trucks.

- Trucks participating in the pilot program would also have to be Federal bridge formula compliant and meet axle weight limits of Federal law.

- The pilot program will require collection of data on the weight of pilot program vehicles at the time of any reportable accidents, data that is not available today.

Increased Safety

- Currently, a majority of states already have higher truck weights on state and local roads, meaning these trucks are driving past schools, neighborhoods, and playgrounds. By allowing this common-sense opt-in pilot program, we will be moving these trucks back to the Federal Interstates where they belong, according to the Transportation Research Board.

- Members of the Shippers Coalition already participated in a mini-pilot program through authority from the CARES Act and the COVID-19 emergency declaration. These authorities allowed states to issue permits to trucks operating above federal weight limits on the Interstate.
    - Member companies found that there was **no** increase in reportable accidents during this emergency period from their use of heavier configurations.

- Each axle must have wheels and brakes, so the sixth axle means that there will be an additional set of brakes on the vehicle. USDOT found that this will allow the 6-axle vehicle to stop shorter than its 5-axle counterpart.

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[1] U.S. DOT "Compilation of Existing State Truck Size and Weight Laws" May 2015 pp. 18-206

[2] Interstate Highway Truck Weights- White Paper- Maine DOT September 20,2010

Infrastructure Protection

- The addition of the 6th axle means that the weight will be better distributed. Per axle weight will be less than trucks that are 80,000-pounds on 5 axles.

- US DOT's 2015 study found pavement life cycle cost savings of 2.4 to 4.2 percent.[3]

- The Minnesota Department of Transportation found that the addition of a sixth axle and an overall a reduction in the number of trips needed to transport a given amount of cargo reduces pavement costs.[4]

- US DOT's 2015 Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight study found that there were **no** bridges that needed to be rehabilitated or replaced on the Interstate system to accommodate 91,000 pounds on 6 axles.[5]

[3] US DOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study Technical Reports, Vol. I "Technical Summary Report", June 2015, p. ES-8.

[4] Minnesota Department of Transportation "Minnesota Truck Size and Weight Project" June 2006, p 12.

[5] US DOT Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study Technical Reports, Vol. I "Technical Summary Report", June 2015, p. 62-63