



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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1,500 Local Officials Deliver Letter to Congress Opposing Bigger Tractor-Trailers

WASHINGTON – As Congress focuses on critical, must-pass legislation as it returns from Congressional recess, over 1,500 local government leaders from across the country sent a letter to Capitol Hill asking policymakers to oppose any increases in truck size or weight, including heavier single-trailer trucks. The signers include county and municipal officials as well as public works directors and county engineers. The letter, entitled "[Bigger Trucks: Bad for America's Local Communities](#)" and organized by the [Coalition Against Bigger Trucks](#), was delivered today to Capitol Hill offices.

"Local governments, and our constituents, are the backbone of this county and we want Congress to know the policies they debate and implement have serious consequences," said Berks County, Pennsylvania Chairman Christian Leinbach. "Heavier and longer trucks will damage our roads and bridges, leaving local taxpayers footing the bill. We cannot afford this and Members of Congress need to hear our concerns."

[The joint letter states](#), "Local communities and our residents are what drive this country. We work every day to make sure the needs and safety of our residents are met. Allowing heavier and longer trucks will most certainly set us back in our efforts."

Leinbach, who also serves on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Counties, noted that while the current debate is about increasing truck weights on interstate highways, local infrastructure will be impacted. "Trucks do not load and unload on interstates. These trucks find their way on to local roads and bridges, whether it is for meals and gas or to deliver their cargo. This impacts us all."

The letter is being sent at the same time bigger-truck proponents lobby legislators to allow longer and heavier trucks on the road. This includes efforts to get their favored language in must-pass legislation, such as the farm bill and appropriations funding bills. These bills are too important to be put at risk by including such a deeply controversial issue.

Studies have shown heavier and longer trucks damage infrastructure, especially bridges, and are more dangerous. In fact, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), in its 2016 Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits

Study recommended against any such increases and did not recommend any pilot projects. And a recent study, [The Impacts of Heavier Trucks on Local Bridges](#), found over 72,000 local bridges that would be put at-risk by 91,000 pound trucks, the current weight limit being debated in Congress. The study found the cost to replace those bridges at over \$60 billion, a cost that would be paid for by state and local governments. No current weight increase legislation includes any additional funding for infrastructure.

Kevan Stone, CEO/Executive Director of the National Association of County Engineers, explained the importance of the local bridge study. “The impact of heavier and longer trucks on locally owned bridges is an important issue that needs to be explored nationally, including by Congress,” Stone said. “While we have long known that heavier trucks increase bridge damage, this study represents the first attempt to work directly with local officials to quantify the real world impacts. County officials, specifically county engineers, know their bridges better than anyone else.”

Buchanan County Engineer and an author of the study Brian Keierleber knows firsthand the damage these heavier trucks cause. “Let me be clear – heavier trucks damage bridges. I have spent my entire professional career building and maintaining infrastructure, specializing in bridges,” said Keierleber. “And for those who think posting a bridge solves the problem of keeping these heavier trucks from crossing, it does not. The only time posting works is if I am standing on the bridge, in front of the truck.”

Keierleber, who is a past president of the National Association of County Engineers, also raised concerns about safety. “My job is to build and maintain roads and bridges. But I also care about the dangers heavier and longer trucks create to motorists. When a truck and a car are involved in a crash, most of the time the car loses. Adding weight will only make the situation worse.”

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