

January 27, 2012

The Honorable John Mica
Chairman
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U. S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mica:

As you build support for a highway reauthorization bill, the undersigned food and agriculture organizations urge you to include the "Safe and Efficient Transportation Act" (SETA) (H.R. 763) in the legislation you develop for your committee's consideration and oppose efforts to simply authorize yet another study on whether truck weights should be increased.

We believe SETA is a carefully crafted proposal with broad support that will safely improve transportation efficiency, facilitate economic growth and bring much-needed improvements to the American food supply chain. SETA will modernize U.S. truck weight limits, allowing the food and agriculture industry to safely enhance the efficiency of truck and connected modes of transportation.

The current federal vehicle weight limit of 80,000 pounds was enacted nearly 30 years ago. Many truck shipments today reach this limit with significant space still left in the trailer. SETA would give each state the option to correct this inefficiency by setting interstate weight limits of up to 97,000 pounds for properly outfitted vehicles. Studies already show that this is a safe and efficient alternative to putting more trucks on the road.

The higher weight limit permitted by SETA would apply only to single-trailer trucks equipped with six axles. Such vehicles maintain braking and handling standards, and even improved weight-per-tire distribution, which lessen pavement wear. The sixth axle enables shippers to safely utilize more space inside trucks so the same amount of food and agriculture products can be shipped on fewer trucks, which reduces fuel consumption, emissions and vehicle miles for each ton shipped.

On behalf of America's food and agriculture community, we urge you to include SETA in the highway reauthorization bill being developed for consideration by your committee.

Thank you for your leadership in crafting a long-term fiscally-responsible plan for supporting America's surface transportation infrastructure.

Respectfully,

American Beverage Association

American Fruit and Vegetable Processors and Growers Coalition
American Frozen Food Institute
American Meat Institute
California League of Food Processors
Frozen Potato Products Institute
International Dairy Foods Association
Grocery Manufacturers Association
Midwest Food Processors Association
National Confectioners Association
National Frozen Pizza Institute
Northwest Food Processors Association
Shelf-Stable Food Processors Association
Snack Food Association
United Fresh Produce Association

cc: Ranking Member Nick J. Rahall, II