

October 7, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of our organizations representing public health and safety advocates, truck drivers, and victims and survivors of truck crashes we are writing to indicate our strong support for the pending reform of the hours of service (HOS) rule for truck drivers proposed by the Department of Transportation (DOT). The DOT proposal addresses a serious and deadly public health and safety problem in the trucking industry. Large truck crashes resulted in 3,380 deaths in 2009, at a cost to the nation of nearly \$20 billion, about one-half of all truck related crash costs. Numerous studies by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as well as the federal government and other research institutions including the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety show that truck driver fatigue is a major factor in truck crashes.

The HOS reform rule proposed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is a commonsense reform that will return to the traditional limit on consecutive driving hours and prevent abuse of the minimum 34-hour off duty restart between lengthy 70 to 88 hour work weeks. Efforts by special interests to stop or weaken this proposal have failed to acknowledge the significant benefits of HOS reform that will amount to more than \$2 billion in savings to the American public. The proposed HOS reform rule will have an overdue and positive impact on highway safety, create more industry jobs, and improve the overall health of truck drivers. Specifically, the HOS reform rule will:

- Produce \$2.2 billion in crash, injury and health cost savings including –
 - \$1 billion dollars in associated injury and crash costs, and
 - \$1.2 billion in health and related medical costs to truck drivers and taxpayers;
- Save lives and avoid injuries by preventing truck crashes;
- Reduce the number of tired truckers who are involved in truck crashes;
- Protect the health and welfare of truck drivers by reducing driving hours and increasing off-duty rest time;
- Create nearly 40,000 additional jobs in the trucking industry for out-of-work drivers.

The proposed rule is essential to achieving safer highways and providing a healthier work environment for truck drivers. Returning to the traditional limit on consecutive driving hours will reap at least \$1 billion in financial and safety benefits in terms of lives saved, injuries prevented and crashes averted – more than offsetting any estimated cost to the industry. This change will also result in direct health benefits to drivers estimated to be between \$840 million and \$1.24 billion. This yields a net benefit to the public of about \$1.2 billion over and above the estimated \$1 billion cost to industry of the HOS reform rule.

In addition, the HOS reform rule will create nearly 40,000 jobs in the trucking industry. These are jobs that are sorely needed in this economy. This needed reform would restore many of the nearly 50,000 truck driving jobs that were eliminated from the industry when the current HOS rule was implemented in 2004. The entire \$1 billion savings to the trucking industry of the 2004 HOS rule was derived from the elimination of nearly 50,000 good paying jobs driving trucks. It was the 2004 HOS rule, overturned in two back-to-back unanimous court rulings by the U.S. Court of Appeals, that extended the longstanding limits on driving hours and increased truck driver fatigue levels.

Reforming the HOS rule is a top priority of our organizations. We ask that you expeditiously move forward on this initiative that advances the health, safety and economic well-being of the public.

Sincerely,

Joan Claybrook
Chair
Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

James Hoffa
General President
International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Jacqueline Gillan
President
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

Daphne Izer
Founder
Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.)

John Lannen
Executive Director
Truck Safety Coalition

Robert Weissman
President
Public Citizen

Jack Gillis
Director of Public Affairs
Consumer Federation of America

Steve Owings
Co-Founder
Road Safe America

Andrew McGuire
Executive Director
Trauma Foundation

Wanda Lindsay
Founder
The John Lindsay Foundation

Roy Crawford
Underride Network