

March 8, 2023

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science and Technology
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science and Technology
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Chairman
Committee on Environment & Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment & Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Cruz, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of our collective food and agricultural memberships, we write to urge further action to improve supply chain function with legislation to aid truck transportation – the largest freight mode with over 60 percent of all freight by weight according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Trucks are the linchpin of the transportation sector with most forms of freight trucked at least once during the supply chain process. Pipelines move almost another 20 percent of freight, while the rail and water modes combine for almost 20 percent.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of trucking to our nation's well-being and we believe economic and environmental benefits can be unlocked through legislative reform. We support the Safer Highways and Increased Performance for Interstate Trucking Act (SHIP IT) and the meaningful solutions it provides to address the need for more truck drivers, truck parking, productivity, environmental efficiency, options during emergencies, and flexibility for ag haulers.

SHIP IT aims to bolster our nation's driver workforce with two years of tax incentives for qualified drivers, grants to help cover driver schooling costs, and additional options for obtaining commercial drivers' licenses. The bill also provides authorization for additional parking facilities to help improve drivers' quality of life.

Further, the bill increases truck productivity and environmental efficiency by allowing states to opt into pilot programs to permit trucks with at least six axles to weigh up to 91,000 pounds on Interstate Highways. The additional axle and associated set of brakes serve to increase stopping capability and trucks would be required to comply with the Federal bridge formula and axle weight limits to protect bridges and roads. In addition, SHIP IT provides the Secretary of Transportation the authority to relax truck weight limits during emergencies to help with relief efforts.

Lastly, SHIP IT helps ag haulers by providing a 150-air-miles exemption from hours-of-service regulations on the backend of hauls to provide needed flexibility for agriculture and its seasonal changes in freight demand.

We believe by supporting SHIP IT, Congress can achieve positive benefits for the environment while improving the economic competitiveness of the United States. We look forward to working with you in support of improving U.S. transportation and bolstering America's infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Transportation Working Group

National Associations

Agricultural Retailers Association
Agriculture Transportation Coalition
Amcot
American Bakers Association
American Beekeeping Federation
American Beverage Association
American Building Materials Alliance
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
American Sugar Cane League
Consumer Brands Association
Corn Refiners Association
Cotton Growers Warehouse Association
Forest Resources Association
Hardwood Federation
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils
International Dairy Foods Association
International Fresh Produce Association
Leather and Hide Council of America
Livestock Marketing Association
Meat Import Council of America
National Aquaculture Association
National Barley Growers Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grain and Feed Association
National Grocers Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Potato Council
National Sorghum Producers
National Sunflower Association
National Turkey Federation
National Wheat Growers Association
North American Meat Institute
North American Millers' Association

North American Renderers Association
Pet Food Institute
SNAC International
Soy Transportation Coalition
Specialty Soya & Grains Alliance
The Fertilizer Institute
U.S. Canola Association
U.S. Forage Export Council
US Pea and Lentil Trade Association
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
USA Rice

State and Regional Associations

Agribusiness Association of Iowa
Agribusiness Council of Indiana
California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association
California Fresh Fruit Association
California Grain and Feed Association
Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois
Illinois Soybean Association
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
Kansas Grain and Feed Association
Michigan Agri-Business Association
Michigan Bean Shippers
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association
Missouri Agribusiness Association
Montana Agricultural Business Association
North Dakota Agricultural Association
North Dakota Grain Dealers Association
North Dakota Grain Growers Association
Northeast Agribusiness & Feed Alliance
Northern Pulse Growers Association
Ohio AgriBusiness Association
Pacific Coast Renderers Association
Pacific Northwest Grain & Feed Association
Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association
South Dakota Agri-Business Association
Texas Grain and Feed Association
United Dairymen of Arizona
Washington Association of Wheat Growers
Washington State Potato Commission
Western Agricultural Processors Association
Western Pulse Growers Association
Wisconsin Agri-Business Association

cc: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Members
House Committee on Agriculture Members