

From Bernie



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

John L. Mica
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

Nick J. Rahall, III
Ranking Member

September 23, 2011

James W. Coon II, Chief of Staff

James H. Zoja, Democrat Chief of Staff

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our concerns regarding the U.S. Department of Transportation's proposed changes to the hours of service rules for truck drivers. If finalized, the proposed changes would have a substantial negative impact on the productivity of the \$600 billion trucking industry and will quickly result in a drag on the staggering U.S. economy. This proposed rule was included on your list of Proposed Regulations from Executive Agencies with Cost Estimates of \$1 Billion or More and is scheduled to be made final at the end of October. We request your Administration withdraw these changes and allow the current rules to remain in place.


We are committed, as you and the U.S. Department of Transportation are, to ensuring the safety of the Nation's highways, including the safety of commercial motor vehicles. On this point, we have not seen any evidence that the current hours of service rules, in place now for more than 7 years, are unsafe and need revision. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Since implementation of the current rules, there has been a reduction in severe and fatal crashes involving large trucks, even as truck mileage has increased by almost ten *billion* miles. Most recently, there has been a dramatic reduction in severe and fatal crashes involving large trucks and buses, with a combined 1,497 fewer lives lost between 2007 and 2009. The current rules are clearly having a positive impact on highway safety.

We are very concerned the proposed changes will result in additional trucks and drivers on the road to deliver the same amount of freight, adding to final product costs and increasing congestion on our already overburdened highways. In our enormous, consumer-driven economy, the last thing our government should be doing is artificially increasing the costs of almost every consumer good with unneeded regulation. As such, we will aggressively oversee any attempt by the U.S. DOT to impose new regulatory burdens on the trucking industry by making changes to the current hours of service rules.

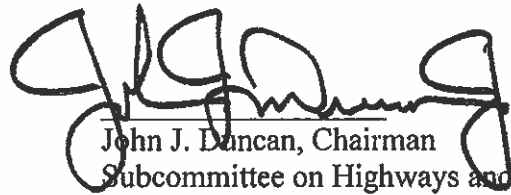
President Obama
September 23, 2011
Page 2

Mr. President, thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.


Sincerely,



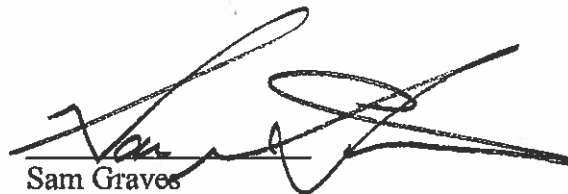
John L. Mica, Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure



John J. Duncan, Chairman
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit



Bill Shuster, Chairman
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines
and Hazardous Materials



Sam Graves
Member of Congress

CC: U.S. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood