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April 8, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair, Senate Commerce, Science,
and Transportation Committee
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman, House Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce, Science,
and Transportation Committee
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member, House Transportation
and Infrastructure Committee
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, Chairman DeFazio, and Ranking Member Graves,

The National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) has a long history of opposing any legislation that would increase the legal size or weight limits of trucks because of the serious safety risks inherent in allowing bigger trucks on our nation's roads and bridges. Representing over 70,000 EMS practitioners nationwide, NAEMT is concerned with motorists' safety and the safety of our members who put their lives at risk every day in response to roadside emergencies.

EMS professionals are in a unique position to evaluate the consequences of increasing the size or weight of trucks on the road today. The heavier the truck and the longer the truck, the larger the crash footprint and the more severe the crash. It comes down to the basic law of physics. Increasing the mass of a vehicle will increase the odds of more severe crashes and more deaths and injuries. In 2019, the most recent year for which data is available, there were 164,584 crashes and over 5,000 fatalities involving tractor trailer semitrailer trucks, according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The size and weight of a truck also affects the safety of first responders as they treat crash victims on the roadside. Bigger trucks are more difficult to control and take longer to stop. While it may seem to be common sense for drivers to slow down near the scene of a crash, this is not always the case. Of ongoing concern to our members is the inability of larger trucks traveling at high speeds to slow down in a timely manner, especially during inclement weather. Increasing the size and weight of trucks only makes this inherently dangerous situation worse.

In tandem with our concerns about public safety, we also recognize the fact that bigger trucks would likely lead to more trucks on the road in general by diverting freight from rail service. Bigger trucks, and more of them, are a bad deal for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users alike.

We agree with the recommendation made by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) in its 2016 Truck Size and Weight Limits Study – **there should be no increases in the size or weight of trucks.**

As momentum builds for the passage of a new infrastructure and transportation funding bill, NAEMT requests your support for the safety of the public as well as our first responders, and asks that you oppose efforts to increase the size and weight of trucks on our roads, including any amendments allowing heavier and longer trucks as “pilot projects” or special exemptions for commodities, which will have the effect of subjecting more American motorists to a unsafe conditions on our Interstates, highways and streets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "E".

Bruce Evans, CFO, SPO, NRP, MPA
President, NAEMT