



FED-PP-01: TRUCK WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: ADOPT

PROPOSED POLICY: OPPOSE legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight limits beyond those in current federal law due to safety concerns and potential impacts to local roads.

BACKGROUND: In 2015, the U.S Senate voted on a bipartisan basis to maintain the current federal limits of double tractor-trailer lengths on the interstates and the entire National Highway System, including interstates. The vote was to oppose longer double-trailer trucks called Double 33s that are 10 feet longer than today's twin-trailers and 17 feet longer than the standard single-trailer trucks.

In 2015, the U.S. House voted on a bipartisan basis to maintain the federal limits of tractor-trailer weights on the interstates and the entire National Highway System. The vote was to allow an increase at the federal of truck weight by over 5 tons, from the current 80,000 pounds to 91,000 pounds for a 10 state, 15-year pilot project.

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) delivered its three-year Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study Report requested by Congress. That report found that heavier and longer trucks had serious safety problems and would impose additional costs to highway infrastructure. The Department recommended that Congress not approve any heavier trucks.

In July 2022 two bills were introduced in the United States Congress which would mandate allowing tractor-trailers to increase their weight limits from the current 80,000 pounds to 97,000 pounds (H.R. 8412) and Twin-33 trucks, which are 10 feet longer than today's 28-foot double-trailers and 17 feet longer than standard single-trailer trucks (H.R. 8411).

ANALYSIS: The volume of traffic on I-75 in Alachua County is getting worse every year. The stretch of I-75 in Alachua County is one of the most dangerous spots in the state even so much that FDOT has created an I-75 relief task force committee. Just in Alachua County, we saw 5 large truck related fatalities in 2020.

Preliminary data from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's annual reporting show that there were 8,178 large-truck crashes in Florida in 2020. Unfortunately, these crashes resulted in 344 fatalities and 3,850 injuries.

Of the 12,680 bridges in Florida, 4,628 bridges are rated in poor or fair condition, over a third of bridges' statewide (FHWA). Over 40% of bridges in Alachua County are in fair or poor condition.



Safety issues with bigger tractor-trailers:

- A 2000 USDOT trucks size and weight study found that multi-trailer trucks have an 11% higher fatal crash rate compared to single-trailer trucks.
- The 2016 USDOT truck size and weight study found that double 33s take 252 feet to stop that is 17 feet longer stopping distance than today's single-trailer trucks and 22 feet longer than today's twin-trailer trucks
- The 2016 USDOT study also found that trucks weighing over 80,000 pounds had higher overall out-of-service (OOS) rates and 18 percent higher brake violation rates compared to those at or below 80,000 pounds. This is especially important because a 2016 study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that trucks with any out-of-service violation are 362 percent more likely to be involved in a crash.

FISCAL IMPACT: USDOT found in its 2016 study that thousands of Interstate and other National Highway System bridges could not accommodate heavier trucks. These bridges would need to be reinforced or replaced, costing billions of dollars. USDOT estimates the 97,000-pound, six-axle configuration would negatively affect more than 6,200 bridges, costing \$2.2 billion. They also found 2,500 bridges that would need to be strengthened or replaced to handle longer double-trailer traffic with a cost of \$1.1 billion. It is important to note that this examination did not include hundreds of thousands of bridges nationwide that are not on the National Highway System that these longer and heavier trucks would utilize.

According to the 2016 USDOT study, Double 33s would increase pavement damage by 1.8 percent to 2.7 percent. which translates to \$1.2 to \$1.8 billion in estimated pavement damage every year. Similarly, this was specific to National Highway System roadways and not inclusive of county roads, which tend to be built to higher standards than county roads.

A total of 30% of Florida's major roads were evaluated to be in poor or mediocre condition. Driving on these roads in need of repair costs Florida motorists a total of \$6.7 billion a year averaging out to \$432 per driver. These costs are due to vehicle repairs, depreciations in vehicle value, increased fuel use and wear on tires. (TRIP Reports, 2022).

FAC STAFF NOTES:

- FAC 2022 Policy Conference
 - FED-PP-01 was recommended for adoption by the committee.
- A similar proposal, *truck/weights size* was adopted in 2016-2017 FAC Legislative Program: Due to safety concerns and potential impacts to local roads, FAC OPPOSES legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight limits beyond those in current federal law.



- Under NACo's Statement of Basic Philosophy under Transportation, there is a section on "Trucks and Vehicle Size and Weights (2022-2023 NACo American County Platform): "NACo believes adequate federal funding should be provided to compensate state and local governments for any infrastructure upgrades necessary to accommodate the vehicle size, weight, and configurations mandated by Congress. NACo opposes any increases in truck size or weight until Congress requires a full impact analysis that any increases may have on the national transportation system, including the added cost on state and local governments. NACo supports full funding of these impacts by Congress and expects Congress to fund any additional impacts suffered by local infrastructure in Congress' performing of the analysis. NACo also supports the continued requirement that all trucks have underride protection devices and believes that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration should periodically review the adequacy of such regulations.
- Congress last increased the federal weight limit in 1982.
- Resources discussed in background: U.S. Department of Transportation Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis Technical Report (2016):
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/531e242be4b045034d6e888d/t/55a6b706e4b0d7358dbfa20a/1436989190037/2015+USDOT+Technical+Reports+-+Safety.pdf>

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ASSIGNED COMMITTEE: FED

BOARD SUPPORT: Yes

UNFUNDED MANDATE: No

PROTECTIVE OF HOME RULE: Yes