



Florida Coalition For Safe Highways

A Program of the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, LLC

(888) 222-8123 • e-mail: derekcabt@earthlink.net • web site: www.cabt.org

Florida Coalition for Safer Highways Mission Statement

The Florida Coalition for Safer Highways (FCSH) opposes efforts at all levels of government to allow bigger, heavier trucks on Florida's roads. FCSH includes elected officials, public citizen organizations, state and local law enforcement agencies, senior citizens, highway safety, environmental and business groups. The FCSH is a program of the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT). In order to protect public safety, the nation's infrastructure and the environment, CABT has embarked on a grass roots campaign to fight the efforts of bigger truck proponents to increase truck length and weights.

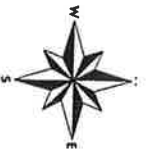
Bigger and heavier trucks present serious safety problems to the motoring public. Grim statistics support this connection: Each year, 5,000 people are killed in truck-related crashes and over 100,000 are injured. Today, almost all of these trucks are conventional, single trailer trucks or "18 wheelers." Now, bigger truck proponents want to place even bigger trucks on the road – including triple and long double longer combination vehicles (LCV's) – and heavy single tractor trailers weighing 100,000 pounds.

Bigger trucks also translate to greater damage to bridges and roads – and it will be the average taxpayer, not the trucking industry, who pays the bill for repairs and maintenance. With tightening budgets at the federal, state and local levels of government, additional resources for highway maintenance and bridge reconstruction will be hard to obtain. In addition, the inevitable result of bigger trucks will be more pollution, higher taxes, more congestion and an unbalanced freight transportation system.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

STATE OF FLORIDA



LEGEND

- Eisenhower Interstate System
- Other NHS Route
- Proposed Intermodal Connector
- Waterway
- Military Base
- Airport
- Amtrak Station
- Bus/Rail Transit Service
- Port Terminal
- Highway/Rail Transfer Facility
- Interchange Bus Terminal
- Multipurpose Pass. Terminal
- Ferry Terminal
- Pipeline Terminal
- Urbanized Area

** Dashed lines indicate proposed routes: **



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Florida Coalition Members

State Organizations

- Florida Community Traffic Safety Team Coalition
- Florida Police Chief's Association
- Florida Sheriff's Association
- Florida College of Emergency Physicians
- Florida Fire Chiefs Association
- Florida League of Cities
- Florida Association of EMT's and Paramedics
- Florida Association of State Troopers
- Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council
- Florida Brain Injury Association
- Florida State Firefighters Association
- Florida Highway Patrol
- Florida Nurses Association
- Florida Chapter of MADD

Group Members

- Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Dept.
- City of Hollywood Fire and Rescue
- City of Miami Dept. of Fire and Rescue
- City of Miami Fire and Rescue
- City of Leesburg Fire and Rescue Department
- City of Leesburg Police Department
- City of St. Petersburg Police Department
- North Bay Village Police Department
- City of Ocala Police Department
- City of Satellite Beach Police Department
- Sumter County Sheriff's Office
- Mayor Geier, City of Palm Bay
- Mayor John A. Buckley, City of Melbourne
- City of St. Petersburg
- City of Belle Glade

- City of Miami Springs
- City of Palmetto
- City of Hialeah
- City of Cinco Bayou
- Central Florida, National Safety Council
- Teamsters Local 769, Miami
- Broward County Audubon Society
- Pinellas County Community Traffic Safety Team
- Consumer Action
- The Greater Seventh Avenue Improvement Association, Inc.
- EVAC/Emergency Medical Foundation
- Emergency Medical Foundation/EVAC
- Orlando Regional Healthcare Systems
- Metroplan Orlando
- Metroplan Orlando Citizens' Advisory Committee
- National Safety Council, Central Florida Chapter
- Pinellas County Community Traffic Safety Team
- Winter Park Chamber of Commerce
- Lake County Community Traffic Safety Team
- Greater Ft. Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce



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SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO KEEP TRUCKS FROM GETTING BIGGER

A bill (the "*Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act*") will soon be introduced in Congress to freeze the size and weight of trucks on our highways. This important legislation will help save lives and preserve our roads and bridges. Please write and ask Congresswoman Brown to be an original sponsor of this bill.

WHAT THIS BILL WILL DO

- **Freeze the length of trucks**

This bill will cap the length of truck trailers at 53 feet. Today, there is no federal limit on trailer length. Trailer lengths have grown over the years to the point that the longest trailers – as long as 60 feet – present serious dangers to motorists. Eleven states currently permit trailers longer than 53 feet. The bill will allow existing legal operations of trailers that exceed 53 feet to continue.

- **Freeze the weight of trucks**

Overweight trucks are more dangerous and tear up the roads and bridges. Yet, because of "grandfather rights" and other loopholes in the law, trucks routinely operate on Interstates and other highways above federal weight limits. This bill would freeze the weight of trucks on the entire 156,000 miles of National Highway System (NHS).

- **Extend the freeze on LCVS**

The current freeze on longer combination vehicles (LCVs) – long double and triple trailer trucks – applies only to interstate highways and certain designated roads. This bill will extend the freeze to the entire NHS.

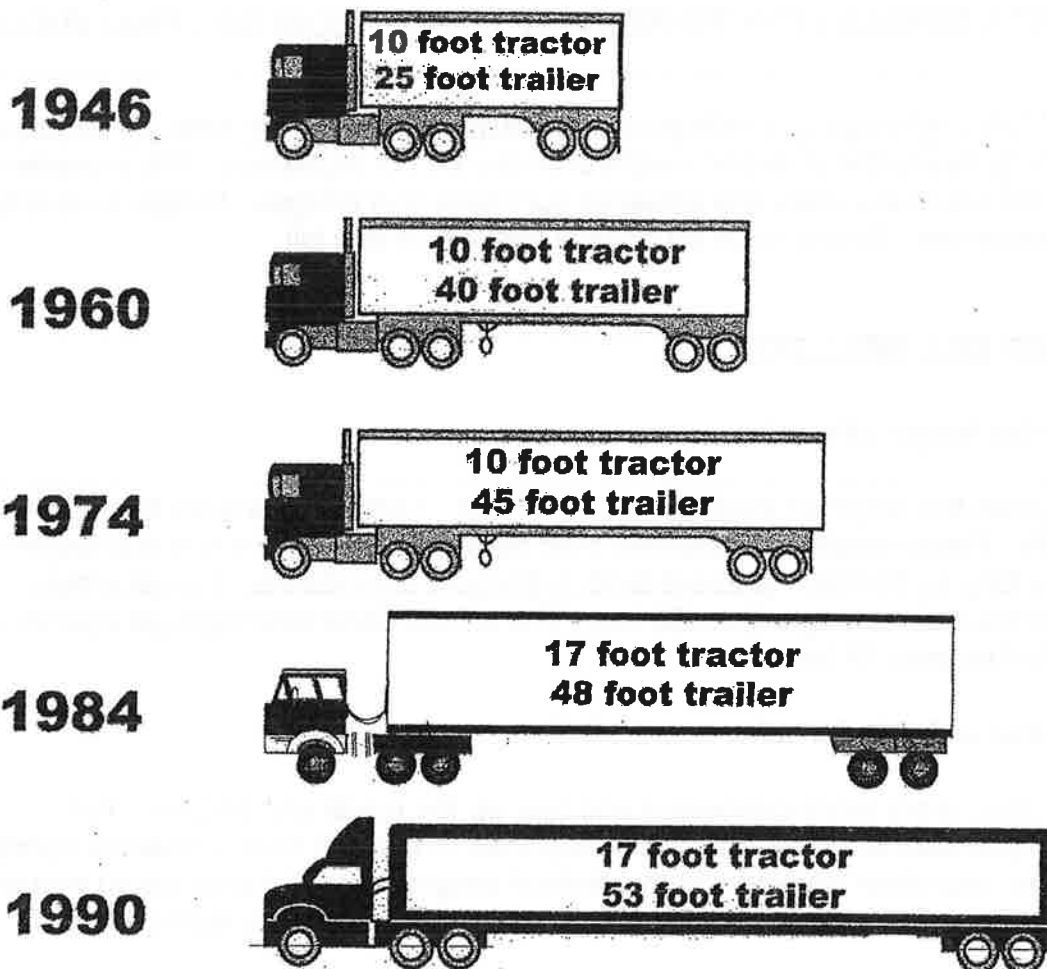
- **Improve enforcement of truck weight laws**

Trucks often run illegally overweight because the profits from hauling the extra weight often exceed the fines levied by the states for overweight operations. This bill calls for a model fine schedule designed to recover as fully as possible all infrastructure,

enforcement and administrative costs of overweight operations and to act as an effective deterrent.

THE PROBLEMS WITH BIGGER TRUCKS – HERE ARE THE FACTS

Trucks have been getting longer



Longer trucks are more dangerous

Single trailer trucks –

- Longer single trailer trucks are more prone to off-tracking and lane encroachment and produce a dangerous “swing-out” of the rear trailer, which increases the risk of collision (the “guillotine effect”) with other vehicles.

Multi-trailer trucks

- Long double and triple trailer trucks (LCVs) are likely to have **fatal accident involvement rates at least 11% higher** than today's single tractor trailers (*U.S. DOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study* (U.S. DOT Study), *Volume III, Scenario Analysis*, 2000, p. VIII-5).
- LCVs – especially triples – have unusually poor stability performance. On one measure of stability – rearward amplification or the “**crack the whip effect**” – triples show more than 200% poorer performance than conventional tractor trailers (*U.S. DOT Study, Volume III, Figure VIII-11*).
- The safety risks of LCVs are compounded by their incompatibility with today's crowded highways. Because they're so big and so slow, LCVs have trouble **merging** or changing lanes in freeway traffic. Similarly, they have problems **maintaining speed** on upgrades, creating serious safety risks. According to a University of Texas study, a 15 mile per hour speed differential increases accident risk nine times (*An Assessment of Changes in Truck Dimensions on Highway Geometric Design Principles and Practices*, The University of Texas Center for Transportation Research, 1981).

Heavier trucks are more dangerous

- According to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI), there is a *strong statistical link between higher weights and a **greater risk of fatalities***. As weights go from 65,000 to 80,000 pounds the risk of an accident involving a fatality goes up 50% (*U.S. DOT Study, Phase 1, Working Paper 1 and 2, 1995, p. 37*).
- Heavier tractor-trailers will tend to have a *higher center of gravity*. Raising the center of gravity increases the risk of **rollovers**.
- Heavier singles can have **braking problems**. Trucks above 80,000 pounds gross weight must add a third axle to the rear of the truck to avoid increased pavement damage. Adding axles makes it harder to keep brakes in proper adjustment. Roadside inspections have found that 25% or more of trucks on the road today have brakes that are dangerously out of adjustment.

Heavier trucks – both singles and LCVs -- tear up our roads and bridges

- Nationwide operation of longer combination vehicles would add **\$53 billion** in new bridge reconstruction costs, according to the *2000 Federal Truck Size and Weight Study*. In addition, there would be \$266 billion in lost time and extra fuel burnt by auto drivers stuck in traffic because of bridge work resulting from nationwide operation of LCVs. Total bridge costs would be **\$319 billion**.

