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## **America benefits from tractor-trailer overhaul**

### *House bill would limit trailer lengths and freeze tractor-trailer weights*

*Washington, DC* – A bill offered by Rep. James McGovern (D-MA) on March 19 and to be introduced by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) today would limit trailer lengths on our nation's highways, as well as freeze tractor-trailer weights at their current level.

The Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act (H.R. 1618), co-sponsored by 48 bi-partisan House members, would be a significant step in protecting the environment and making the country more energy secure.

“Transportation is the largest and fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions,” said Rob McCulloch, Transportation Advocate for Environment America. “Within transportation, truck freight represents the fastest growing mode of pollution, producing more than 220 million tons of carbon dioxide each year. Capping tractor-trailer weights is one of the best ways to limit this source of global warming pollution.” Freight trucks currently produce about four percent of annual US carbon dioxide pollution, according to statistics from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Trucks with heavier gross weights require larger engines that decrease fuel economy on a miles-per-gallon basis. “Heavier trucks are dirtier, more dangerous, and significantly increase wear and tear on our roads and bridges - three strikes and you should be out,” McCulloch said. Furthermore, studies have shown that increasing truck weight limits have the overall effect of increasing the number of trucks on the road, not reducing them.

There are ways to transport freight that use less energy and create less pollution. For example, on a per ton basis, rail carries freight more than three times further per gallon of fuel than trucking. While big trucks only add to congestion and traffic delays on

America's highways, 88 percent of the nation's freight rail systems operate below capacity, according to a 2007 report by the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission. Since 1990, growth in truck freight transport has outpaced rail freight transport, a gap which is expected to widen if industry trends continue.

"There are also better ways to make our truck fleets more fuel efficient and less polluting. Making tractor-trailers heavier and longer prevents other improvements, such as enhanced aerodynamics and advanced engine technology, from reaching their full potential," McCulloch said.

"We have the opportunity to keep truck weights from creeping higher and higher through legislation like the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act. Passing this crucial legislation will not only improve the environment and make our roads safer, it will also protect our infrastructure investments and make America more energy secure," McCulloch added.

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*Environment America is a federation of state-based, citizen-funded environment groups working for clean air, clean water, and open space. [www.environmentamerica.org](http://www.environmentamerica.org)*