



February 23, 2010

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John L. Mica
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica:

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) is a non-profit organization that represents the directors of forestry agencies from the fifty states, eight U.S. territories and associated states, and the District of Columbia. NASF members are responsible for programs and services that address a wide range of public interests in the management of forest resources. Such policies typically promote establishment and maintenance of markets for forest products including effective infrastructure to support long term sustainable utilization of the resource.

In that regard NASF supports the intentions of the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act of 2009 (HR 1799) that authorizes a state prerogative to increase gross vehicle weight standards on respective Interstate Systems.

Numerous studies and state experiences have been cited that indicate opportunities for improving the effectiveness and safety of transportation networks for forest products. The Maine and Vermont pilot projects as recently authorized by Congress should provide objective analysis on how to harmonize federal and state weight limits to achieve safe as well as efficient transportation of forest products. Subject to expanded provisions for safety, such as six-axle requirements, it seems appropriate to NASF that all states should have similar opportunities to assess the feasibility and adjust weight limits as may be appropriate on Interstate Systems.

To better understand safety implications and potential impacts on highway durability and maintenance, NASF concurs with the annual reporting requirements and five-year assessment provisions of Section 2 that examine operational issues, safety statistics and bridge maintenance costs. Further, NASF agrees with the caveat that the Secretary of Transportation may terminate operation of vehicles in excess of 80,000 lbs. if such operation constitutes an unreasonable safety risk .

Bridge safety and maintenance is a significant issue with NASF members. Extraordinary provisions to specifically address bridge issues is critical. In that regard NASF supports establishment of the Safe and Efficient Vehicle Bridge Infrastructure Improvement Program and the adjustments in the Overweight Vehicle Tax to fund that program.

Executive Director
Jay Farrell

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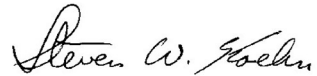
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Adverse economic conditions continue to threaten the viability of the forest products industry as well as communities and landowners that depend upon the forest resource for a livelihood. And, there are additional expectations that forest resource management and utilization will be an integral part of national policy for renewable energy and stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions. Networks for successful and equitable commerce are prerequisites for achieving that policy. NASF believes that HR 1799 establishes important and appropriate delegation to states to collaborate with federal authorities in setting such direction for the Interstate highway system.

Thank you for considering the comments and observations of NASF on the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act of 2009.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven W. Koehn".

Steven W. Koehn
NASF President