



November 3, 2015

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 (H.R. 3763)

Dear Speaker Ryan:

On behalf of the National Retail Federation (NRF), I am writing to you today to express our strong support for the “*Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015*” (H.R. 3763), the multi-year federal surface transportation reauthorization legislation. A long term surface transportation reauthorization is needed to address the growing bottlenecks and inefficiencies in the supply chain resulting from a lack of infrastructure investment. We urge Congress to pass this important legislation to provide long term stability to the nation’s surface transportation programs.

Retailers are among the nation’s largest shippers, moving hundreds of billions of dollars worth of merchandise through the nation’s ports, railroads and highways each year. The condition of the transportation infrastructure and its ability to handle cargo quickly and efficiently are vital to retailers’ businesses. As such, we support the bipartisan bill as marked up by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

NRF is the world’s largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation’s largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.6 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation’s economy. NRF’s [*This is Retail*](#) campaign highlights the industry’s opportunities for life-long careers, how retailers strengthen communities, and the critical role that retail plays in driving innovation.

The critical program reforms contained in H.R. 3763 will continue to allow for accelerated project delivery; increase the role of the private sector in national infrastructure investment and planning; and most importantly continues to focus on the development of a multimodal freight policy and infrastructure.

NRF encourages **support** for the following amendments which have been offered –

Amendment #6 – Duncan (TN) – Clarifies that motor carriers who have not been prioritized for a compliance review by FMCSA due to their safe operations are equal in safety status to “satisfactory” rated carriers.

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Amendment #29 – Ribble (WI), Schrader (OR), Rouzer (NC), Peterson (MN) – Give states the option of increasing the truck weight limits on their Interstate Highways from 80,000 pounds to 91,000 pounds if the trucks are equipped with an additional sixth axle. Would not impact existing exemptions already enacted under the law.

Amendment #40 – Denham (CA), Brown, Corrine (FL), Costello (PA), Ashford (NE) – Clarifies the intent of Congress and ensure the motor-carrier industry can operate under one standard when engaging in commerce. Pre-empts a patchwork of 50 different state meal and rest break laws to provide certainty for regional carriers doing business.

Amendment #61 – Crawford (AR), Ashford (NE) – Establishes a three-year pilot program to allow CDL license holders under the age of 21 years to operate vehicles transporting agricultural items across state lines within a 150-mile air radius. If the Department of Transportation finds no negative impact to safety the program will be made permanent.

Amendment #120 – Newhouse (WA) – Directs the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) to establish a port performance statistics program, with quarterly reports to Congress. The program will collect basic uniform data on port performance and provide empirical visibility into how U.S. ports are operating, identify key congestion issues, and ensure U.S. commerce continues to flow efficiently.

Amendment #155 – Reichert (WA), Schrader (OR), Newhouse (WA) – Requests a GAO study on the economic impact of contract negotiations at ports on the west coast.

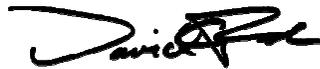
NRF encourages **opposition** to the following amendments which have been submitted –

Amendment #12 – Lewis (GA) – Strikes the graduated commercial driver's license program language in H.R. 3763 and replaces it with a study on the safety of intrastate teen truck drivers.

We strongly urge you to support quick passage of H.R. 3763. **Please note that NRF may consider votes on H.R. 3763 and related amendments as Opportunity Index Votes for our annual voting scorecard.**

If you have any questions, please contact Jonathan Gold, Vice President, Supply Chain and Customs Policy (goldj@nrf.com) in the NRF office.

Sincerely,



David French
Senior Vice President
Government Relations