

AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA,
Los Angeles, Calif., June 3, 1968.

HON. CHET HOLIFIELD,
House Office Building,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. HOLIFIELD: Over the past few years there has been increased pressure by the commercial trucking industry for permission to operate larger equipment over our nation's highways. The economic benefit to the trucking industry and to shippers is frequently cited. It is possible such benefit would be passed along to the public consumer.

However, the question is whether such a benefit would outweigh the possible detrimental effect on our present traffic safety efforts and the more rapid deterioration of our nation's highways, the costs of which are more difficult to assess.

The Senate recently passed and sent to the House of Representatives a Truck Size and Weight Bill, SB 2658. This bill presumably allows a reasonable increase in truck load limits and dimensions on the interstate system.

The Automobile Club of Southern California is seriously concerned with the implications of this bill for the following reasons:

(1) No truck movement originates or terminates on the interstate system; thus all loads must be moved over local roads and bridges regardless of their original design or present condition.

(2) There is testimony from the American Association of State Highway Officials that even the interstate system has not been designed and constructed to handle the allowable loads proposed in SB 2658. Other local roads are even less adaptable to increased load limits.

(3) The width increase from 96" to 102" cannot be accommodated safely on many local roads which must be traversed to and from the interstate routes.

(4) There is absolutely no length limit in the bill; thus, long trains will be allowed. These trains are difficult to maneuver in a forward direction and impossible to move in a reverse direction in case of an emergency. The increased time necessary to pass such a train will make passing even more hazardous on any two-lane roadway in hilly terrain. Each "no passing zone" will become longer, often making adjacent zones into one continuous no passing area.

(5) There is no specific performance standard (such as horsepower-to-weight-ratio) required for such huge trucks. Additional loads will be added or attached to already slow moving vehicles, which are hazardous and a constant source of public irritation.

(6) At a time when continual effort is being made to enhance traffic safety, this move could seriously increase highway hazards to an alarming degree. Wider, longer, heavier trucks without mandatory provisions for greater power, better braking systems, positive coupling between units and absolute length limits are neither conducive to improved traffic operations nor acceptable to many of the nation's motorists.

We earnestly suggest, as an alternative, that an objective study be authorized to determine:

(1) Public costs for highway improvements and repairs required by increased load limits and truck sizes, as well as methods to provide for such costs.

(2) Ability of local roads to distribute these loads to and from the interstate system.

(3) Need for performance standards to increase truck safety.

(4) Ability to maneuver long truck trains in a safe manner without impeding the stream of vehicular traffic on the nation's highways.

We urge your careful consideration of the long-range effects of SB 2658, both as to the possible detrimental effect on our highway safety efforts, the tremendous costs of highway improvements and repair, and the attitudes and desires of the general public.

Very truly yours,

JOSEPH E. HAVENNER,
Executive Vice President.

STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN PAPER INSTITUTE, INC., AND THE AMERICAN
PULPWOOD ASSOCIATION ON H.R. 14474

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee: