

"There are 518,226 highway bridges in use now that were built prior to 1936. They are over 30 years old and practically none of them were designed for loads over the H-15 design load and many are for the equivalent of H-12, H-10, or even less."

EFFECTS OF INCREASING SIZES AND WEIGHTS

Roads and bridges are designed for specific weights and expected volumes of traffic. It is easy to change a vehicle dimension, harder to change a road, but almost impossible to change a bridge. Are we going to destroy the completed sections of the Interstate System for the sake of 250,000 trucks? We must find a top limit on vehicle dimensions and weights and stick to it.

VEHICLE LENGTH

H.R. 14474 fails to provide a maximum length limit. Absence of a length limit or maximum gross weight limit will lead inevitably to longer combinations on our nation's highways. We could have double bottom combinations as well as triple bottoms with vehicles well over 100 feet long. This will turn our Interstate highways into truckways, with highway freight trains making travel so uncomfortable and so hazardous that passenger car operators will be forced off the newer highways onto other roads not frequented by trucks.

Does this sound a little far-fetched? According to a recent article in Commercial Car Journal, triple truck trains have been operated by Western Gillette on an unscheduled basis for the last four years. A vice president of that company confidently predicts that triples will be in regular use by 1970 or 1972 at the latest. The same issue carries a notice that the New York State Thruway Authority and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority have been approached on the use of triple bottoms. Since the appearance of this issue, the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority has granted this request.

The bill before you contains no provision assuring adequate operating characteristics so as to make such large trucks compatible with today's traffic.

AASHO has recommended that the minimum weight/horsepower ratio be at least one horsepower for every 400 lbs. This should be the absolute minimum and should be specified in the law or by safety standards of the National Highway Safety Bureau.

THE GRANDFATHER CLAUSE

H.R. 14474 contains a "grandfather clause" permitting states which already have higher weights and greater dimensions than contained in the present bill to retain such higher limits. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 also had such a "grandfather clause."

There may have been some justification for the "grandfather clause" in 1956 because the effects of heavy trucks on our bridges and roads did not appear to be adequately documented. After spending \$27 million to find the answers, we now know what these effects are. There is no longer any justification for continuation of the "grandfather clause."

To permit some states to continue with heavier weights and greater sizes than permitted for other states continues the same situation which has led the trucking industry and others to press for increased weights.

The "grandfather clause" in Section 127 of Title 23 should be eliminated. States presently having higher axle weights and heavier gross weights than permitted in Section 127 as presently written should be required to conform to the lower weights within a stipulated time interval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

AAA makes the following recommendations:

1. No upward revision in the present axle weights or gross load limits in Title 23.
2. Width limit be retained at 96 inches.
3. The establishment of a length limit or maximum gross load limit so as to preclude the possibility of extremely long truck combinations.
4. Elimination of the "grandfather clause."
5. Establishment of a weight/horsepower ratio of at least 400 to one for all trucks. This should be accomplished either by statute or appropriate safety standard.