

February 3, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science
& Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science
& Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

As the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee begins its work on the safety title to accompany a surface transportation reauthorization bill, the undersigned organizations write to express strong support for the DRIVE-Safe Act (S.569), and to urge its inclusion in the forthcoming title. This strongly bipartisan legislation, which is currently cosponsored by more than one third of the Senate, will provide the opportunity for young Americans to become truck drivers, giving them access to good paying jobs in an industry that needs them, while ensuring and promoting safety.

Though 48 states currently allow individuals to obtain a commercial driver's license at 18, they are prohibited from driving in interstate commerce, crossing state lines, until they are 21. The DRIVE-Safe Act would change this through a two-step apprenticeship program that creates a path for these drivers to enter the industry. As the name implies, however, the legislation's first priority is safety. In order to qualify, candidates must complete at least 400 hours of additional training, more than what is required for any other CDL holder in the nation.

Seventy percent of the nation's freight is carried by commercial trucks, yet as our economy strengthens, motor carriers are having difficulty finding the drivers they need to handle growing capacity. According to a recent estimate, the nation needs an additional 60,800 truck drivers immediately, a shortage that is expected to grow to more than 160,000 by 2028. In fact, when anticipated driver retirement numbers are combined with the expected growth in capacity, over the next decade, the trucking industry will need to hire roughly 1.1 million new drivers, or an average of nearly 110,000 per year.¹ As a result of the driver shortage, companies in supply chains across the economy are facing higher transportation costs leading to increased prices for consumers on everything from electronics to food.

Trucks used in the program established by the DRIVE-Safe Act would be required to be outfitted with the latest safety technology including active braking collision mitigation systems, forward-facing event recording cameras, speed limiters set at 65 miles per hour or less and automatic or automatic manual transmissions. Drivers training within the program will be accompanied by an experienced driver throughout the process.

¹ Truck Driver Shortage Analysis 2019, American Trucking Associations

The DRIVE-Safe Act will help our nation's freight continue to move while preserving and enhancing the safety of our highway system. It will help fill desperately needed jobs and provide younger Americans with the opportunity to enter a profession where they can earn an average of \$53,000 a year with full benefits.

Thank you for your attention and thoughtful consideration of this important and timely legislation. We look forward to working with you to include the DRIVE-Safe Act in the Senate Commerce Committee's forthcoming safety title to accompany a surface transportation reauthorization package.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Apparel & Footwear Association
American Bakers Association
American Beverage Association
American Chemistry Council
American Coatings Association
American Forest and Paper Association
American Foundry Society
American Frozen Food Institute
American Supply Association
American Trucking Associations
Associated Grocers of New England
Associated Equipment Distributors
Arizona Beverage Association
Auto Care Association
Beverage Association of Tennessee
Brick Industry Association
Commercial Vehicle Training Association
Consumer Brands Association
Convenience Distribution Association
Florida Beverage Association
FMI
Foodservice Equipment Distributors Association
Forest Resources Association
Georgia Beverage Association
HDDA: Heavy Duty
Heating, Air-Conditioning, & Refrigeration Distributors International
Hoosier Beverage Association
Intermodal Association of North America
International Association of Plastics Distribution
International Bottled Water Association
International Dairy Foods Association

International Foodservice Distributors Association
International Warehouse Logistics Association
Kansas Beverage Association
Maine Beverage Association
Michigan Soft Drink Association
Minnesota Beverage Association
National Association of Chemical Distributors
National Association of Electrical Distributors
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Truckstop Operators
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
National Automatic Merchandising Association
National Beer Wholesalers Association
National Council of Chain Restaurants
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Franchisee Association
National Grain and Feed Association
National Grocers Association
National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Potato Council
National Private Truck Council
National Propane Gas Association
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association
National Restaurant Association
National Retail Federation
National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association
National Waste and Recycling Association
New England Fuel Institute
New Hampshire Beverage Association
New Hampshire Grocers Association
North Carolina Beverage Association
Ohio Beverage Association
Pet Industry Distributors Association
Petroleum Marketers Association of America
Plumbing Manufacturers International
Portland Cement Association
Power Transmission Distributors Association
Printing Industries of America
Retail Industry Leaders Association
Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades
SNAC International
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association

Textile Care Allied Trade Associations
The Fertilizer Institute
Tire Industry Association
Truck Renting and Leasing Association
Virginia Beverage Association
Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America
Wisconsin Beverage Association
World Millwork Alliance
UPS
U.S. Chamber of Commerce