United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 8, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

We have serious concerns with the suspension of hours of service rules designed to prevent truck driver fatigue in the Fiscal Year 2015 omnibus appropriations bill. The suspension of the rules could force tired truckers to stay on the road for longer periods of time, impairing the safety and wellbeing of the public. This provision should not move forward without further study and debate. We urge you not to include it in the omnibus legislation.

In August, we wrote to Senator Mikulski outlining serious safety concerns and highlighted important testimony from a recent hearing held in the committee of jurisdiction that underscored the dangerous implications of rolling back these critical, life-saving rules. We are extremely disappointed that despite our grave concerns, this matter is moving forward through the appropriations process, rather than with extensive study and debate. This issue is far too important to have been altered outside of the committee of jurisdiction and without debate by the Senate.

The current hours of service rules governing rest requirements for truck drivers are based on years of study and sound scientific research in addition to a review of public comments. They should remain firmly in place. In 2012 large trucks were involved in 3,700 accidents with close to 4,000 fatalities and 104,000 injuries. With so many crashes, we should be examining further limitations on hours of service, not suspending the rules currently in place. At the very least, hours of service requirements should not be suspended during further study, but rather maintained until evidence illustrates a change would not pose a threat to public safety.

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx and former Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Administrator Anne Ferro, have both stated the current rules enhance safety and there is no data or evidence to support suspending the rules. It is estimated that the current hours of service rules can prevent 1,400 crashes, 19 fatalities and 500 injuries each year. Some in the industry, however, seem more interested in the profits that come with drivers working longer hours than with the safety benefits that come from ensuring truck drivers receive adequate rest.

America's truck drivers work long grueling hours to deliver goods across the nation. They are a vital part of our economy, and we owe it to these workers and the people driving on our roads to

ensure that fact-based science-driven policies are in place, rather than throwing out the rules to put profits over safety.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. If there is any further compromise that can be reached to protect individuals from needless accidents, injuries and fatalities, we urge you to give it due consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator