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**COALITION FOR TRANSPORTATION PRODUCTIVITY SENDS LETTER
SUPPORTING PROVISION TO SAFELY RAISE INTERSTATE WEIGHT LIMIT IN
MAINE**

***Sen. Collins' Proposed Pilot Program Would Yield Safer Highways and Greener, More
Efficient Shipping***

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Sept. 11, 2009) – The Coalition for Transportation Productivity (CTP), an advocacy group of more than 100 shippers and allied associations dedicated to responsibly increasing federal weight limits on interstate highways, today sent a letter to Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME). The letter applauded her provision in the FY 2010 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill that would enable Maine to conduct a one-year pilot program to test the impact of allowing 100,000-pound, six-axle single-trailer trucks to access Maine's interstate highway network.

“Sen. Collins recognizes the fact that allowing heavier, more efficient trucks on our nation's interstates will improve highway safety and reduce fuel use and emissions,” said CTP Executive Director John Runyan. “This program will make roads safer by consolidating freight on fewer trucks and by taking heavy trucks off rural roads that often wind through towns, passing schools and driveways, and putting them on better-engineered, divided, multi-lane interstate highways.”

“At a point when many producers are facing tough economic times, the provision enables them to reduce the number of weekly shipments – cutting costs, spurring investment and protecting valuable jobs,” continued Runyan. “U.S. manufacturers are also forced rely on expensive freight consolidation because our major trading partners have higher truck weight limits, but Sen. Collins' provision would help Northeastern producers compete for market share and efficiently export goods to Canada.”

CTP supports The Safe and Efficient Transportation Act of 2009 (H.R. 1799), sponsored by Reps. Michael Michaud (D-ME) and Jean Schmidt (R-OH). The bill would allow heavier –not larger– trucks on interstates by giving each state the option to increase its interstate vehicle weight limit to 97,000 pounds for trucks equipped with a sixth axle for safety. Without changing truck size, the additional axle maintains current braking capacity and weight-per-tire-distribution and minimizes pavement wear. A user fee imposed by the bill would fund vital bridge repair.

For full text of the letter sent to Sen. Collins, please see below.

About the Coalition for Transportation Productivity

The Coalition for Transportation Productivity (CTP) is a coalition of more than 100 shippers and allied associations dedicated to increasing the vehicle weight limit to 97,000 pounds on federal interstate highways for vehicles equipped with an additional axle as a way to address the safety, economic and environmental challenges facing our nation's freight transportation network. CTP supports a user fee on units equipped with the additional axle to be used for bridge repair. For more information, visit www.transportationproductivity.org.

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September 11, 2009

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
461 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Dear Senator Collins:

On behalf of the Coalition for Transportation Productivity (CTP) and its 120 members nationwide, I am writing to express strong support for Section 194 of the FY 2010 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill now pending before the Senate. This provision would enable the state of Maine to conduct a one-year pilot program to test the impact of allowing 100,000 pound, six-axle single-trailer trucks to access Maine's interstate highway network.

CTP was organized to promote the passage of federal legislation giving each state the option to increase its interstate vehicle weight limit to 97,000 pounds for six-axle trucks if the state determines that the infrastructure of these roads can safely accommodate the heavier loads. Maine officials have determined that their state roads are fully capable of handling these loads. It is important to note that highway safety, environmental performance and economic productivity would all be improved by allowing this pilot program to occur.

Increasing the interstate weight limit would allow businesses and shippers to carry a specific amount of freight using fewer trucks. This is especially significant for highway safety because accident rates among heavy vehicles are strongly tied to the vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and consolidating freight would reduce VMTs to make roads safer. It is important to note that since the United Kingdom raised its gross vehicle weight limit for six-axle vehicles in 2001, fatal truck-related accident rates have declined by 35 percent. More freight has been shipped, while the number of VMTs to deliver a ton of freight has declined.

Moreover, the current interstate weight limit often forces trucks to travel on rural roads that often wind through towns, passing schools and private driveways, where accidents are more likely to occur. The provision would put these trucks on better-engineered, divided interstate highways, where they can safely and efficiently transport goods.

Allowing six-axle vehicles to carry more weight would also yield cleaner air and greener shipping by cutting fuel use and carbon emissions. A 2008 American Transportation Research institute study found that six-axle trucks carrying about 100,000 pounds get 17 percent more ton-miles per gallon than five-axle trucks carrying 80,000 pounds. More efficient shipping means a smaller carbon footprint.

Finally, raising the interstate vehicle weight limit will have widespread economic benefits. At a point when many producers are facing tough economic times and smaller budgets, the provision will enable them to reduce the number of weekly shipments – cutting costs, spurring investment and protecting valuable jobs.

Furthermore, producers in Maine and across the country are currently at a productivity disadvantage because Canada, Mexico and most European countries now have higher truck weight limits. Harmonizing weight limits with our major trading partners will ease the cost of moving U.S. goods into international markets and stop costly freight consolidation at our ports and border crossings. With Canada's higher weight limits, the provision in Maine would help Northeastern producers compete for market share and efficiently export goods.

It is a fact that allowing heavier, more efficient trucks to operate on our nation's interstates would improve safety, reduce environmental impact and strengthen the economy. CTP applauds Sen. Collins for introducing the provision.

Sincerely,

John Runyan
Executive Director
The Coalition for Transportation Productivity
www.transportationproductivity.org