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Rails Knock Higher Truck Weight Limits

A shipper-backed proposal to increase truck productivity by lifting federal weight restrictions was opposed by railroad interests at a recent National Association of Manufacturers meeting in Washington Feb. 12.

The Coalition for Transportation Productivity, which launched a campaign in December to increase weight limits for trucks from 80,000 lbs. to 97,000 lbs., says its supporters would be willing to pay for the productivity benefits through a user fee on units equipped with an additional axle.

"Not only did the railroads oppose this when I raised the issue, but they expressed support for a higher vehicle use tax on existing 80,000-pound trucks," said John Runyan, co-chairman of the coalition, whose members include Kraft Foods, Boise Cascade, and MillerCoors.

"It was a little bit of a stunner to see them not only oppose improved truck productivity but support higher fees on existing vehicles - and higher costs for U.S. manufacturers during an economic recession."

Railroad representatives were not immediately available for comment.

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