



## **Shipping coalition seeks higher US truck tonnage limit**

Houston, 8 June (Argus) — The US could save up to 2bn gallons of diesel fuel annually, which translates to 42bn pounds of carbon emissions a year, if Congress passes the Safe and Efficient Transportation Act of 2009, according to the Coalition for Transportation Productivity (CTP).

The Act, introduced by US Rep. Michael Michaud (D-Maine), seeks to increase the vehicle weight limit on US interstate highways to 97,000 pounds, up from 80,000 pounds, for vehicles equipped with a sixth axle, according to the CTP. The newly formed industry association has a membership of more than 100 goods-transporting companies, including LyondellBasell, Kraft Foods and Coca-Cola.

Six-axle trucks carrying 97,000 pounds get 17pc more ton-miles per gallon than five-axle trucks carrying 80,000 pounds, according to a study by the American Transportation Research Institute released last year.

“This will allow any one company to ship a given amount of product with fewer vehicles and thereby taking vehicles off the highway and reducing vehicle miles traveled,” John Runyan, the CTP’s co-chair, said. “Any individual truck is going to use more fuel to get from point A to point B, but because it’s carrying more tonnage you’re actually getting more efficiency per ton mile.”

The US Department of Transportation estimates that by 2020, the amount of freight shipped throughout the US will increase 87pc over 2000 levels. Getting rid of the 27-year-old rules that limits trucks to 80,000 pounds would improve trucking productivity and mitigate the effects of increased truck traffic, Runyan said.

According to CTP estimates, increasing the truck tonnage limit could cut fuel and carbon emissions by up to 19pc per ton.

The act does not appear to be on the fast track in Congress. It “could take well into next year before the bill is final,” Runyan said.