



WASHINGTON STATE POTATO COMMISSION
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Request to Help Increase the National Gross Vehicle Weight for Interstate Freight Movements

We are asking you to support the upcoming national movement to increase truck weight limits to 97,000 GVW.

This needed change in the Highway Bill is very important to Washington potato growers. Because we are the most distant year-around supplier of fresh potatoes to most large consumer markets, we have to depend on truck shipments as we have very limited access on rail transportation to competitively reach our customers.

The current law allows for a maximum of 80,000 GVW, to move freight which was based on 1980s industry standards of trailer length and equipment technology for safe movement of goods on the interstate system.

Times have changed. The industry standard for trailer lengths is 53 feet, incorporating multiple axles to distribute weight for less road wear. In addition tractors are equipped with efficient engines, state of the art breaking systems, and have the capacity to haul more weight safely on the interstate road system.

With increasing agricultural input costs our potato producers need to look at any possible gain in efficiency to move our commodity across the US. In an example, if you were a typical Washington State potato grower shipping your produce to market you would ship 850 cartons of fresh potatoes at 50 lbs per carton. That is approximately 42,500 lbs and incorporating the weight of the tractor and trailer you would easily reach the maximum allowable 80,000 GVW.

What has changed since the 80s is that new truck and 53 foot trailer incorporating a six axle configuration has the capacity to ship additional weight safely on the interstate system. That means the typical potato growers could ship an additional 200 cartons or 10,000 lbs maximizing the existing space in the trailer. With better, safer tractor trailers on the roads today, that potato grower could increase capacity and capture a shipping efficiency of 19 percent.

By capturing a 19 percent shipping efficiency we can collectively reduce the amount of green house gas emissions, freight congestion and decrease the consumption of energy needed to move produce to market.

We encourage you to help us sport this change and appreciate your attention to this request. We will be contacting your office in the near future to follow-up on this matter.