

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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October 21, 2015

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, supports H.R. 3763, "the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 (The STRR Act)," and urges the Committee to report this important legislation to the full House for consideration as expeditiously as practicable.

Congress is long overdue in its responsibility for providing a long term reauthorization of the surface transportation program, which is the backbone of the American economy. We commend the leadership of the Committee for taking a very important step towards long term certainty.

While the Chamber supports H.R. 3763, we believe the legislation could be improved in some key areas, and the Chamber looks forward to working with the Committee and the House and Senate on these issues as the legislative process continues:

- The Chamber appreciates provisions of the legislation intended to improving the permitting process for transportation projects. However, the Chamber believes that H.R. 3763 would be greatly improved by including provisions similar to the permit streamlining provisions of the Senate transportation reauthorization and H.R. 348, which recently passed the House, because such legislation would provide much more robust permit streamlining.
- The Chamber supports a change that would allow a change in length of twin trailers from 28 feet to 33 feet without a weight increase. This change will improve safety, reduce congestion, lower fuel consumption and emissions, and cut the cost of moving freight, all without a detrimental impact on the highway system.
- The Chamber urges provisions be added to the legislation regarding FAAAA preemption to clarify that the scope of preemption extends to state meal and rest break requirements and state bans on "piece rate" pay. Such clarification would ensure motor carriers can continue to operate efficiently and competitively, under nationally-standard federal regulations, as Congress intended, rather than being forced to adhere to a 50-state patchwork of rules governing driver hours and pay policies.

- The Chamber strongly opposes provisions of the legislation that would increase domestic content procurement requirements. While “Buy America” mandates may appear beneficial to certain areas of the U.S. economy, the reality is that such requirements are counter-productive and drive up public infrastructure costs, unduly burden contractor supply chains, and reduce overall project competition.

While the Chamber strongly supports the provisions of the legislation that would extend the year-end deadline for full implementation of Positive Train Control, the Chamber would also strongly support moving such provisions as a stand-alone measure or as part of other legislation that could be signed into law earlier than the STRR Act.

The Chamber supports H.R. 3763 and urges the Committee to report this legislation to the full House expeditiously.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Josten" being the most prominent parts.

R. Bruce Josten