



**Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association**

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March 17, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

The Honorable Jim Mullen  
Acting Administrator  
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

The Honorable Nicole Nason  
Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao, and Administrators Mullen and Nason;

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) is concerned by the recent announcements that states, including Pennsylvania, are closing rest areas to the public. We understand these decisions are likely being made in an effort to limit passenger vehicle movement, interaction among travelers, and the states' administration and supervision of these facilities during an emergency declaration. However, rest areas are vitally important to truckers, including the 160,000 members of OOIDA, who at this time are being heavily relied upon to transport critical supplies across the country. We request the U.S. Department of Transportation issue directives to states, law enforcement agencies, and the logistics community to avoid imposing policies that jeopardize the safety of American truckers and the public welfare during this national emergency.

For professional drivers, rest areas aren't simply places to purchase snacks and beverages from vending machines – they are invaluable locations to rest when fatigued. Rest areas are located at reliable intervals and locations for truckers, allowing them to minimize what may otherwise be a

difficult, tedious and time-consuming search for parking. Millions of truckers, who simply can't work from home, rely on rest areas to do just that – rest! Closing rest areas while hours-of-service requirements are being relaxed or lifted also sends the wrong message to millions of truckers, who continue to work while the rest of the nation seemingly enters lockdown. It creates a scenario in which their own personal safety seems less important than their productivity.

We are extremely disappointed by policies like the closure of rest areas, which demonstrate a lack of understanding of truckers' needs and a worrisome disregard for their personal safety among states. However, our members are reporting law enforcement officials continue to cite drivers for minor infractions unrelated to safety, needlessly delaying shipments of important resources. Our members also report shippers and receivers have kept in place callous policies, such as prohibiting drivers from even using onsite restroom facilities when a delivery has been made. With the nation relying on millions of hard-working truckers, the professional driver community is turning to the federal government for help in preventing the imposition of unsafe, disruptive and inhumane policies like these.

Right now, truckers are working extremely hard to transport the goods that keep our hospitals prepared and grocery stores stocked, but they need emergency policies to reflect their needs. Compounding the truck parking crisis by closing rest areas, placing drivers out-of-service for violations unrelated to safety, and continuing to allow excessive detention time at loading docks will only limit the effectiveness of our national response to this emergency. Directives from your department to states, law enforcement agencies, and the logistics community would go a long way to ensuring our members are able to operate in the safest and most productive manner throughout these challenging times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Spencer". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Todd Spencer  
President and CEO  
OOIDA