



**Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association**

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May 12, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary  
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 Administrator Nason;

Members of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) have been on the front lines of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts – delivering critical supplies to communities across the country. OOIDA represents 160,000 small-business truckers and professional drivers, who have sacrificed their own wellbeing to keep our country healthy, safe, and productive.

At the outset of the COVID-19 emergency, it was prudent for states to increase truck weight limits to allow for the quick transportation of emergency supplies. These waivers helped drivers make critical deliveries in a timely manner. However, now that emergency and panic buying has slowed and most other economic activity has ground to a halt, there is no longer a need for these exemptions.

In fact, there is currently an excess of trucking capacity, and motor carriers are more than capable of meeting the nation's ongoing transportation needs. Unfortunately, maintaining the weight exemptions only further increases capacity. As a result, our members have seen freight rates plummet to historic and unsustainable lows.

To help improve conditions for small-business truckers, FHWA should work with states to ensure that their emergency weight exemptions expire as soon as possible and are not extended. If not, these policies will continue to add excess capacity to the freight market, further reducing already weak rates and worsening the economic outlook for tens of thousands of small-business truckers.

In many cases, the rates currently offered do not even cover many of our members' operating expenses, meaning they cannot profitably move a load. If this situation continues, many operations will be forced out of business, just when the nation will again turn to truckers to help carry our economic recovery.

While removing these emergency exemptions will not completely solve the issue of low freight rates, it will certainly help to improve conditions for our members. We appreciate your consideration of this recommendation and look forward to working with you to address this issue. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Bryce Mongeon, Director of Legislative Affairs, via email at [bryce\\_mongeon@ooida.com](mailto:bryce_mongeon@ooida.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Todd Spencer".

Todd Spencer  
President & CEO  
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association

cc: Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
Members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee