

Professional Drivers Oppose Heavier Trucks

Heavier Trucks Increase Costs

Trucks are a vital part of Texas' economy, but heavier trucks would put unnecessary economic pressures on small trucking operations. In order to remain competitive, many small business truckers will be forced to absorb new costs to their operating and equipment overhead, including:

- More expensive braking and equipment repair bills
- New trailer purchases
- Additional fuel costs to haul heavier freight
- Higher insurance premiums
- Additional permit fees

Small trucking operations already have small profit margins, so any increase in overhead costs means reduced competitiveness. We should support small business truckers, not make their jobs more difficult.

Heavier Trucks Increase Challenges

Professional drivers are the backbone of the industry. They already face enough challenges on the highway—there is no need to make their jobs more difficult. A June 2015 survey asked professional drivers in Texas their opinion of increasing the maximum gross vehicle weight of tractor-trailers hauling ocean cargo shipping containers (Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association). The survey found that 85 percent of respondents oppose the increase and, of the 10 percent who support it, over half of those respondents had some sort of reservation. Of the 85 percent of respondents opposed, the survey found that drivers have numerous concerns, including:

- Poorly maintained tractors, trailers, and other equipment such as tires
- Increased damage to infrastructure and equipment
- Increased workload without increased freight rates
- Increased difficulty of enforcement
- Increased risk to public safety

Truck drivers also say they would need additional training to operate heavier vehicles. Heavier weight could mean more truck rollovers and trucks that are harder to steer. Adding weight makes it more likely that a truck's equipment—including brakes—will wear out sooner, which can increase the risk of even longer stopping distances.