

POLICY ISSUE BRIEF

SAFE ROUTES ACT

S.1063, H.R.2166

Sponsors: Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI)
Representative Tony Wied (R-WI-08)



FOREST RESOURCES ASSOCIATION



BACKGROUND

In the U.S., weight limits on interstate highways are established by the federal government, while state or local governments establish weight limits on other roadways. State weight limits for log trucks exceed federal interstate highway weight limits in all major timber-producing states. This disparity discourages loaded log trucks from traveling on interstate highways. Log trucks traveling on non-interstate roads have a greater risk of accidents as they encounter two-way traffic, intersections, school zones, pedestrians, and driveways. Allowing trucks transporting raw forest products (logs, pulpwood, chips, or biomass) access to the U.S. Interstate Highway System at legal state gross vehicle weight (GVW) is safer.

- Published studies in the peer-reviewed International Journal of Forest Engineering showed the safety and efficiency benefits of allowing log trucks access to the interstate system at state-legal gross vehicle weights. These studies showed that access to an interstate route for a short distance avoided small towns, school districts, and intersections would lower accident rates, reduce CO2 emissions, cause less damage to rural roads, and reduce transportation costs for small logging businesses (Conrad, 2020 and Blinn, 2023). On a per-load basis, log trucks have a lower fatality rate than other heavy trucks in 83% of the lower 48 states (Blinn, 2023).
- Another separate study of log trucks in Georgia showed that 50 percent of accidents occurred in urban areas. This same study also showed that 41 percent of the log truck accidents occurred within five miles of an interstate (Conrad, 2018).
- Findings of a nationwide study of fatal log truck crashes in the U.S. stated that the most common pre-crash event occurred when another vehicle traveled into a truck's lane from the opposite direction (Cole, 2019).
- Congressman David Rouzer recognized the following at a February 12, 2025, hearing of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Highways and Transit Subcommittee: "[vehicle] Fatality rates remain one and a half times higher in rural areas than in urban areas, our rural roads often have narrower lanes, limited shoulders, exposed hazards, and limited clear zones."

REQUESTS



Cosponsor the Safe Routes Act (S.1063) in the 119th Congress.



Support legislation allowing trucks to safely haul heavier weights on the Interstate.



Support the License Act of 2025 (S.191), (H.R. 623) — improving the efficiency of obtaining a commercial driver's license (CDL).

ACCESS TO THE INTERSTATE AT LEGAL STATE WEIGHTS

Safer

Allowing trucks hauling logs, pulpwood, chips, or biomass access to the interstate is safer. It allows trucks to avoid areas such as school zones, intersections, and small towns where the risk of an accident is higher and reduces pedestrian and vehicle encounters with log trucks.

Less Costly

Causes less damage to rural roads.

More Efficient

Traveling on interstates uses less fuel and reduces the time it takes to transport logs from the woods to a manufacturing facility.

Improves the Economy of Scale

Reduces transportation costs for small logging businesses.

ABOUT FRA

The Forest Resources Association (FRA) is the only national organization representing all sectors of the wood supply chain. It advocates for its members on federal policy, supply chain relations, and forest operations. FRA members are represented in 49 states and 384 congressional districts.

For more information, please contact:

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