



**ON THE
HILL**
A Weekly Advocacy Update from TIA



The Latest News and Updates from TIA's Government Affairs Department



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Aero Back in Style

As gas prices return to record highs, and the Biden administration continues the push in applying its green agenda, trucking companies have renewed interests in their aerodynamics to see if there are any methods that can be used to save them gas – therefore money – and suffice the green movement.

TruckLabs based out of California came up with a solution: TruckWings. The design that mounts on the back of the trailer focuses on decreasing the air gaps between the truck and trailer (this is called drag reduction). The results have been promising. Savings have been anywhere from 3%-6% in fuel expenditures.

The fuel savings are not TruckWings main flex – its CO₂ reduction is. With California's strict environment laws and the EPA's encouragement of the SmartWay program, the TruckLab product has proved to be a game changer within the trucking industry by satisfying both environmental agencies.

With TruckWings, drivers are able to track live statistics measuring fuel reductions and carbon output. This combined with other companies like ZF (Texas-based) Optiflow trailer tails (flaps on the end of a truck that deploy at 45 mph and retract at 10 mph operated on a secondary air system) continues to advance the trucking industry into cleaner, more fuel-efficient ways in getting cargo around the country, which hopefully results in having a more stable and environmentally friendly supply chain.

TIA will continue to track federal and state regulations regarding this issue.

COVID Hours of Service Declaration Comes to an End

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has halted its COVID-19 hours of service emergency declaration that enabled haulers to operate outside the normal range of service hours.

The FMCSA let this rule expire on October 15, 2022, which was a result of the last extension waiver (45-day extension) granted in August of this year. The ending of this declaration came after industry experts like the American Trucking Associations (ATA) and Truck Safety Coalition weighed in saying the waiver was no longer needed and cited concerns of roadway safety should it be continued further implying a regularly scheduled shift rotation like before the pandemic.

In contrast – not to the waiver, but less restrictive time constraints and regularly scheduled shifts - the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) said it believed the safety demonstrated by carriers while using the waiver proves that greater flexibility should be used going forward to help drivers rather than abiding to strict schedules. Individual truckers stated they appreciated the COVID loads because it allowed them to rest when tired and drive when rested – not having to abide by strict time restrictions helped get loads to destinations in a safer manner.

VA Rep Introduces New CDL Bill

Representative Bob Good (R-VA-5) introduced a bill earlier this month in the U.S. House of Representatives that aims to repeal the FMCSA's entry-level driver training rule (ELDT) that went into effect in February. The Trucking Workforce Improvement Act would end an unnecessary and burdensome regulation in training for new driver's licenses.

The ELDT rule was finalized in December 2016, and after first implemented was delayed until February 2022, established minimum standards for training required for new CDL applicants. These new standards make it hard to find drivers to transport cargo and have resulted in driver shortages. Farmers and manufacturers everywhere are adamant in saying more regulation from DC is exactly what they do NOT need during an already challenging driver shortage. Rep. Good's bill would aspire to expedite and de-regulate the process in hopefully making it easier to find new drivers.

Good's bill would allow smaller fleets with less than nine CDL holders to bypass entry level driver training requirements by enabling states to grant a 'small business restricted CDL.' The hope is this bill will expedite the process in getting quality drivers behind the wheel and improve our driver shortage, which will improve our supply chain.

FMCSA Pursues Speed Governors

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is set to pursue speed limiters according to the Department of Transportation (DOT).

DOT says it 'intends to proceed with a motor carrier-based speed limiter rulemaking'. FMCSA estimated the rulemaking will be in the Federal Register by the end of June of 2023.

New FMCSA Administrator Robin Hutcherson thinks speed limiters are necessary for the safety of the driver and well-being of the truck. She stated that according to data, speed can implicate seriousness of an injury and damage to a truck.

FMCSA would enforce this mandate by putting electronic control units on trucks that are used to govern speed. The speed that trucks would be cutoff at is yet to be determined.