

June 17, 2020

Dear Member of Congress:

The undersigned organizations write you today with a request to amend HR 2, the Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America Act (INVEST in America Act). We appreciate the opportunity to provide input that impacts our nation's agricultural sector. The farmers, ranchers, food and beverage manufacturers, processors, package suppliers and agricultural product marketers that comprise our memberships are dedicated to providing the safe, abundant and affordable food, fiber and feed required to ensure our country stays healthy and fed.

We respectfully request your support for a crucial amendment proposed by Rep. Mike Bost (IL). The amendment would strike "Sec. 4306. Hours of Service.", language that focuses on unnecessary additional oversight, review and requirements for current and future exemptions to the hours of service rule. Many of these, including an original agricultural exemption (title 49, sec. 395.1(k)), have been in place for up to 35 years without issue. These exemptions are crucial in providing flexibility to our nation's agricultural suppliers, producers, and transporters.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the agency granting and overseeing these exemptions, has an arduous process in place to properly vet those applying for the exemptions (title 49, sec. 381). When an individual or group applies for an exemption or waiver, they are required to submit a checklist full of items for review, including statistics showing their operation will be as safe or safer whilst utilizing the exemption. In addition to the laundry list of requirements put forth by FMCSA, a public notice on the exemption is published in the *Federal Register* for at least 30 days for public comment. Upon completion of the comment period, the Agency then has another opportunity to deny or alter the exemption prior to finalizing it.

The proposed language in the INVEST in America Act would not only duplicate efforts currently being done by FMCSA, it would add several additional levels of requirements and scrutiny to a process that has worked safely and efficiently for years. At a time of limited resources and an uncertain economy, the last thing we need to do is encumber our agricultural sector with changes to a process that has proven safe and fair for decades.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request to support Congressman Bost's HOS amendment. If you have questions, please contact Mark Ratto in Rep. Bost's office at mark.ratto@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference
Agricultural Retailers Association
Agriculture Transportation Coalition
American Beekeeping Federation
American Beverage Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Forest & Paper Association
American Honey Producers Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Soybean Association
Cotton Warehouse Association of America
Equipment Dealers Association
Hardwood Federation
International Dairy Foods Association

Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils
Leather and Hide Council of America
Meat Import Council of America
National Aquaculture Association
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grain and Feed Association
National Grange
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Potato Council
National Sorghum Producers
National Sunflower Association
North American Meat Institute
North American Millers' Association
North American Renderers Association
Southwest Council of Agribusiness
Specialty Soya & Grains Alliance
The Fertilizer Institute
United Dairymen of Arizona
United Fresh Produce Association
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice
U.S. Canola Association
U.S. Dry Bean Council
Western Growers