

RESUME

DISCUSSION; APPROVAL OF LETTER IN OPPOSITION OF HB2213, "SAFE ROUTES ACT"

Chair Waymack is requesting the Board's approval to send the attached letter to Senator Mark Warner in opposition of HB2213, "Safe Routes Act." She states that she has long supported the CABT in their quest to keep bigger trucks from our roadways. This bill allows an increase in the size of logging trucks and she is against heavier trucks.

The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warner,

Like many other counties in Virginia, I have always had concerns about proposals being discussed in Congress to allow heavier and longer trucks on our roads. My concern is two-fold: additional damages by bigger trucks to our highways would cost taxpayers even more in maintenance and repair, but I am also concerned about the real-world safety impacts on our roads.

Recently, I learned about HR 2213, which has curiously been named the "Safe Routes Act". This legislation would allow even heavier log trucks and trucks hauling paper/pulp on our interstates around the Commonwealth, which would include Interstates 95 and 295 that comes through our county. I do not believe allowing even heavier trucks on our frequently-congested interstates makes us any more safe.

I am hoping that you will oppose this significant 5-ton increase for these trucks, with public safety being the primary consideration. In 2018, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) determined that heavier trucks over the current 80,000-pound interstate standard could result in a higher frequency of crashes, as well as the severity of crashes that occur. That means more injuries and fatalities on our high-speed roads – and that's only the physical and emotional toll – It also means more resources expended by our first responders, as well as cost to taxpayers with increased damage to infrastructure.

As I understand it, this legislation would be applicable to logging trucks and other products related to the forestry industry. If we start allowing heavier trucks on the interstates for this particular industry, how will we be able to say no to other industries that come forward and ask for the same increase in weight in the future? In the end, this will add up to nothing more than a Broadway to increase on our interstates that put motorists across Virginia in more danger.

Please oppose HR 2213.

Best Wishes,

(signatures of Commissioner(s) and/or county public safety officials)