

Michaud Pushes Truck Weight Issue as House Committee Examines Rising Fuel Costs in Trucking Industry

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"The trucking industry is reeling from the high costs of diesel," said Michaud. "Maine truckers and small businesses are shutting down because of these high costs. While there are a number of things that we could do to help, one that wouldn't cost anything, but that could help a lot, is instituting an equitable truck weight policy in America."

Currently, most of Maine's Interstate highways are subject to the federally mandated truck weight limit of 80,000 pounds. However, Maine's state limit is 100,000 pounds - and it would be difficult to lower it due to the demands of Maine's major industries, especially forest products, and the through traffic from the surrounding states and Canadian provinces which all have 100,000 pound limits on all of their roads.

"I have been working on this issue for years, and I know very well that Maine's industries and trucking companies are not alone in their struggle," said Michaud. "I was pleased that trucking representatives at the hearing today went on the record in favor of increasing truck weight limits, like those on Maine's Interstate north of Augusta. The witnesses pointed out that by changing weight limits nationally, truckers and shippers alike would benefit. Larger loads shipped on highways without a patchwork of different truck weight limits would yield more efficient loads by bringing down shipping costs and the amount of overall fuel consumed."

This is the second time in recent weeks that Michaud has raised the truck weight issue before his colleagues on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. On April 23rd, at a subcommittee hearing on rail capacity, Michaud asked Evan Hayes, Chairman of the Idaho Barley Commission, about our nation's current truck weight policies.

"If you are asking for my recommendation, I would say this - the Congress is very lax," Hayes testified. "If they do not work on the truck weight issue today with the cost of moving freight, with the so-called pollution from the trucks on the road, I think it is a very foolish error by us, the American public, who do not recognize the fact that we can haul products on trucks at much heavier weights by simply changing the configuration of the truck, actually increasing the safety of the truck and yet we are still locked in a primitive 80,000 pound freeze that was put on back in the eighties by the same rationale that is happening today."