



February 18, 2022



The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of America's trucking industry, which employs 7.9 million Americans and moves more than 71% of domestic freight throughout the country, we write to request assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to address the nationwide shortage of truck parking capacity. The truck parking shortage has plagued the trucking industry for decades, and the consequences of insufficient capacity are as wide-ranging as they are severe. The scarcity of truck parking spaces across the country decreases safety for all highway users, exacerbates the industry's longstanding workforce challenges, contributes negatively to driver health and well-being, diminishes trucking productivity, and results in unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions. It is critical that the USDOT coordinate with the White House, State Departments of Transportation, Congress, and other stakeholders to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to mitigate the growing truck parking shortage so that trucking can continue to deliver for America.

The nationwide shortage of truck parking capacity has been well-documented for decades, and the most recent iteration of the USDOT's Jason's Law Report demonstrates that the problem is worsening over time. The 2019 Jason's Law Report found that 98 percent of drivers regularly experience problems finding safe parking—a sharp uptick from the 75 percent figure reported just four years earlier in the 2015 report. Moreover, the USDOT found that the truck parking shortage exists in every state and region, and is most acute along major freight corridors. Unfortunately, the full 2019 Jason's Law Report has not been released, and we hope you will expedite its publication. Ultimately, the pervasive truck parking shortage can be explained with simple math—there are about 3.5 million truck drivers in the United States and approximately 313,000 truck parking spaces nationally; for every 11 drivers, there is one truck parking space.

The lack of available truck parking has dire safety implications for truck drivers as well as the motoring public. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) hours-of-service (HOS) regulations require drivers to take a 30-minute break when they have driven for a period of eight cumulative hours without at least a 30-minute interruption, and a 10-hour break after 14 hours of driving. When drivers are unable to find safe, authorized parking, they are stuck in a no-win situation, forced to either park in unsafe or illegal locations, or violate federal HOS regulations by continuing to search for safer, legal alternatives. A staggering 70% of drivers have been forced to violate federal HOS rules because of this common scenario.<sup>1</sup> As a last resort, drivers reluctantly park in unsafe locations—such as highway shoulders, interstate entry and exit ramps, and abandoned properties—creating heightened safety risks for all motorists. Importantly, 84% of drivers feel unsafe when parked in unauthorized areas.<sup>2</sup> This dilemma puts law enforcement in a difficult position; enforcement officials can either force truck drivers to relocate, placing them in violation of HOS rules and taking a risk that the drivers are not too fatigued to drive, or they can allow the drivers to remain parked illegally. The bottom line is that safety is compromised when truck parking is not readily available.

Of equal importance is the impact that the shortage has on driver health and wellbeing. Truck drivers are the lifeblood of the trucking industry and the backbone of the supply chain, but the shortage of truck parking belies the essential nature of their work. Truck drivers consistently rank truck parking availability as a top

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<sup>1</sup> *Truck Parking Report*, Trucker Path, July 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

industry concern in annual driver surveys,<sup>3</sup> yet little has been done to address this challenge. It is difficult to conceptualize a workplace without reliable access to restrooms, food, and well-lit facilities, but this is the unfortunate reality for truck drivers in America. In the context of the trucking industry's longstanding workforce challenges, the shortage of safe truck parking is a significant source of stress for drivers and is a major factor contributing to the industry's retention problems.<sup>4</sup> How can the trucking industry recruit and retain a highly-qualified driver workforce when their workplace—America's roads and bridges—fails to meet drivers' most basic needs?

Furthermore, the shortage of truck parking capacity diminishes driver productivity, resulting in reduced driver pay and increased operating costs. Truck drivers often park prior to exhausting available drive time, and drivers surrender an average of 56 minutes of available drive time per day.<sup>5</sup> As the Administration noted in its December 2021 Trucking Action Plan announcement, the economic impacts of inefficient use of a drivers' time are profound and the practical impacts of productivity losses create issues throughout our supply chains.<sup>6</sup> The time spent looking for available truck parking costs the average driver about \$5,500 in direct lost compensation—or a 12% cut in annual pay.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the financial burdens of lost productivity are compounded by excessive fuel consumption and the associated environmental impacts of unnecessary truck emissions of criteria pollutants and greenhouse gases.

Congressional champions of the trucking industry have offered several legislative solutions to address the nationwide shortage of truck parking, and last year, the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation that would dedicate \$1 billion to building out capacity. Although the final *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* did not include dedicated funding for truck parking, the bill provided significant increases in accounts where truck parking is an eligible expenditure. We ask that you educate state and local partners about this eligibility and prioritize funding for grants that would increase truck parking capacity. In addition to this assistance for drivers and the supply chain, we ask that you support the *Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act* (H.R. 2187), legislation introduced by Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL) that would establish a competitive discretionary grant program and dedicate \$755 million over five years to fund truck parking projects across the country.

If the USDOT prioritizes the expansion of truck parking capacity and makes significant progress toward that effort, drivers will be safer and healthier, fleets will be more productive, the trucking workforce will be more resilient, and trucks will reduce their fuel needs and emit fewer emissions into the environment. All of these benefits would be passed on to the average American in the form of lower prices, greater availability of goods, and a cleaner planet. We stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,



Chris Spear  
President & CEO  
American Trucking Associations



Todd Spencer  
President & CEO  
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, Inc.

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<sup>3</sup> In the American Transportation Research Institute's (ATRI) annual Top Industry Issues report, "Truck Parking" was the #1 issue for truck drivers for the last two years; prior to that, it was the #2 issue for truck drivers. For more than a decade, "Truck Parking" has been in ATRI's top ten list of critical issues.

<sup>4</sup> According to Trucker Path, 85% of drivers cited parking as the #1 cause of stress at work in a recent survey.

<sup>5</sup> *Managing Critical Truck Parking Case Study: Real World Insights From Truck Parking Diaries*, American Transportation Research Institute, December 2016.

<sup>6</sup> "Biden-Harris Administration Trucking Action Plan to Strengthen America's Trucking Workforce," 16 December 2021.

<sup>7</sup> *A Comparative Analysis of Truck Parking Travel Diary Data*, Transportation Research Record, Vol. 2672(9), 2018.