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September 25, 2014

Hon. Peter Welch
U.S. House of Representatives
2303 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4501

Dear Congressman Welch:

I am writing to convey the opposition of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) to proposed increases in truck size and weight. We are grateful for the services that trucks provide in delivering goods and services to our communities. Nonetheless, VLCT, together with the National Association of Counties and the National League of Cities, urges you to oppose legislation that increases the limit on weight and length of tractor trailers on the roads and bridges in Vermont.

A significant problem with the proposed legislation is that it doesn't specify how to pay for the damage bigger trucks may make to Vermont's fragile transportation infrastructure. Current estimates are that 80,000-pound trucks pay for about 80 percent of the damage they cause. According to the Federal Highway Administration's 2000 Federal Highway Cost Allocation Study, proposed 97,000-pound trucks would only pay for approximately 50 percent of the damage they cause to highways and infrastructure in Vermont. Without additional funding sources, these costs will fall on Vermont taxpayers.

In Vermont, trucks regularly travel through our downtowns and villages on their way to their destinations, which may be far from our state. The movement of increasingly heavy and overlength trucks through narrow streets – with historic buildings immediately adjacent to the traveled way and use by all modes of transportation including bicycles and pedestrians – would increase safety hazards and damage to roads, bridges, and buildings.

As part of the most recent federal transportation bill, Congress mandated a two-year comprehensive study on the impacts of truck size and weight. VLCT urges that significantly more analysis and consideration be conducted on the potential impacts to Vermont roads and highways as well as the livability of our communities before an increase to the size of trucks is considered.

Thank you for your continued attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sponsor of:

VLCT Health Trust, Inc.

VLCT Municipal Assistance
Center

VLCT Property and Casualty
Intermunicipal Fund, Inc.

VLCT Unemployment
Insurance Trust, Inc.

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