

# Federal Priorities for the 119th Congress

## Executive Summary

The Intermodal Association of North America (IANA) is the leading transportation trade association representing the breadth of the intermodal freight industry. Its more than 1,000 corporate members include railroads, ocean carriers, ports, intermodal truckers and over-the-road highway carriers, logistics and intermodal marketing companies, suppliers, and major shippers across the supply chain.

The North American intermodal market is a \$59 billion sector that touches roughly 95 percent of all containerized goods at some point in their journey, moving them safely, securely, and cost effectively. To sustain that performance, IANA promotes policies that strengthen intermodal infrastructure, support its dedicated workforce, and ensure the fluid movement of goods across all modes.

The following outlines six priority issues of critical importance to IANA's diverse membership and to the competitiveness of the U.S. freight system.

### **Congressional Action Needed: Six Priorities to Strengthen U.S. Freight Mobility and Economic Competitiveness**

- 1. Advance intermodal freight through Surface Transportation Reauthorization**
- 2. Combat cargo theft and fraud**
- 3. Protect the independent contractor model for intermodal drivers**
- 4. Expand the qualified truck driver pool**
- 5. Maintain current federal truck size weight limits**
- 6. Truck Parking**
- 7. Oppose Class 1 railroad deregulation**

## 1. Advance Intermodal Freight Through Surface Transportation Reauthorization

### Congressional Action Needed:

Increase intermodal infrastructure investment, streamline permitting, and strengthen federal multimodal freight programs.

- Prioritize federal investments in intermodal freight infrastructure through discretionary grant and formula programs.
- Streamline environmental permitting reviews to cut delays and cost escalation.
- Reauthorize freight and intermodal infrastructure funding to reflect the 50% rise in construction costs since 2020.
- Support the USDOT Office of Multimodal Freight Infrastructure and Policy and expand the FLOW data initiative.
- Finalize designation of the National Multimodal Freight Network with strong emphasis on intermodal infrastructure assets.

### Why It Matters

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), provided over \$567 billion, lost buying power due to inflation. Freight and intermodal infrastructure must keep pace with demand to sustain U.S. competitiveness.

### Impact

- Faster project delivery and reduced cost overruns.
- Improved freight fluidity and economic resilience.
- Stronger multimodal planning and data transparency.

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## 2. Combat Cargo Theft & Fraud

### Congressional Action Needed:

Strengthen efforts to deter, investigate, and swiftly prosecute freight fraud and cargo theft.

- Enact federal measures to identify, deter, and prosecute freight fraud and cargo theft.
- Support the **Combatting Organized Retail Crime Act (CORCA)** (H.R. 2853 & S. 1404), to coordinate local, state and federal law enforcement to prosecute interstate and transnational theft.
- Support the **Cargo Security Innovation Act (S. 3376)** to deploy advanced law enforcement or cargo security technologies at intermodal hubs across the country.

- Support the **Household Goods Shipping Consumer Protection Act** (H.R. 880 & S. 337) to empower FMCSA to block and prosecute fraudulent carrier registrations.

### **Why It Matters**

Cargo theft and fraud have surged, threatening worker safety, disrupting supply chains, and increasing costs for American businesses and consumers.

### **Impact**

- Reduced delivery delays and financial losses.
  - Enhanced safety for truck drivers, rail operators, and yard workers.
  - Stronger federal, state, and local coordination against organized crime.
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## **3. Protect Independent Truck Drivers**

### **Congressional Action Needed:**

Preserve the independent contractor (IC) model that underpins the intermodal drayage workforce.

- Oppose mandates requiring employee driver- models in intermodal drayage.
- Support the **Modern Worker Empowerment Act** (H.R. 1319 & S. 2228) to preserve the IC model.

### **Why It Matters**

Over 80% of drayage drivers are independent contractors by choice. Mandating employee status would disrupt operations, shrink the workforce and increase costs for truckers and consumers.

### **Impact**

- Avoids higher costs for carriers and consumers.
  - Preserves driver freedom to choose their own career path.
  - Prevents workforce loss similar to California's AB 5.
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## **4. Increase the Qualified Truck Driver Pool**

### **Congressional Action Needed:**

America needs more truck drivers. Allow younger, well-trained drivers to enter interstate commerce and support proven apprenticeship pathways.

- Allow 18- to 21-year-olds to drive interstate under rigorous training and safety standards.

- Support initiatives/legislation similar to the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot Program and the DRIVE Safe Integrity Act.

### **Why It Matters**

Age restrictions limit entry into trucking; potential drivers choose other careers before 21.

### **Impact**

- Expands the much-needed drayage workforce.
  - Maintains safety through structured training and oversight.
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## **5. Maintain Truck Size & Weight Limits**

### **Congressional Action Needed:**

Preserve existing federal truck size and weight standards to maintain safe standards.

### **Why It Matters**

In 1991, Congress standardized federal truck size and weight limits to support safe, efficient intermodal operations. Increasing those limits would disrupt established equipment standards, introduce safety risks, and potentially shift freight from rail to trucking.

### **Impact**

- Larger, heavier equipment could accelerate highway and bridge deterioration.
  - Longer combination vehicles for over-the-road trucking would make rail less competitive.
  - Fuel consumption could rise significantly, undermining sustainability goals.
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## **6. Increasing Truck Parking**

### **Congressional Action Needed:**

IANA supports national solutions to America's truck parking challenges.

*The Issue:* Americans are dependent on truckers for the delivery of nearly every product on store shelves, but drivers can't find safe and legal places to rest. Not only does the truck parking space shortage cause business challenges such as significant liability exposure and asset inefficiency, it is also a major safety concern. Reports show that 457 annual deaths and 41,000 annual crashes involving parked trucks on shoulders, ramps and roadsides.

### **Why It Matters**

*Potential Impact to Intermodal Freight Transportation:*

While the majority of truckers in intermodal freight do not travel long distances that require parking for rest stops, this is a major issue that implicates the safety of all supply chain users.

## **7. Oppose Class I Railroad Re-Regulation**

### **Congressional Action Needed:**

Reject untested mandates that would slow rail operations and increase costs.

- Oppose mandates affecting but not limited to equipment, train consist and length, crew size, and operating practices.
- Ensure policies are grounded in data, safety analysis, and operational realities.

### **Why It Matters**

Since 1980, the Staggers Act has delivered a proven, safe, and competitive rail network. New mandates lack demonstrated safety benefits and risk slowing operations.

### **Impact**

- Avoids higher rail costs which could adversely affect intermodal's ability to compete with over-the-road trucking.
- Preserves network velocity and service reliability.
- Prevents conflicting state regulations.

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### **About IANA**

The Intermodal Association of North America (IANA) represents a roster of corporate members including railroads, ocean carriers, ports, intermodal truckers and over-the-road highway carriers, intermodal marketing and logistic companies, and suppliers to the industry. This roster gives IANA a unique position within the intermodal community, one which is authoritative, holistic and able to affect change that benefits everyone. IANA consistently supports the shared needs, interests, and goals of its diverse members – regardless of mode or function – with business solutions, education, and networking opportunities. For more information, visit [www.intermodal.org](http://www.intermodal.org).