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TESTIMONY OF

Anne C. Reinke
President and CEO
Intermodal Association of North America (IANA)

REGARDING

Shifting Gears:
Issues Impacting the Trucking and Commercial Bus Industries in the U.S.

BEFORE

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, Freight, Pipelines, and Safety

JULY 22, 2025

On behalf of the Intermodal Association of North America (IANA), thank you Subcommittee Chair Young, Ranking Member Peters, and Subcommittee Members for convening this hearing to discuss policies and regulations impacting the trucking industry, particularly with an eye toward the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

As the only transportation trade association that represents the combined interests of intermodal freight providers and customers, IANA represents more than 1,000 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. IANA's associate (non-voting) members include shippers (defined as the beneficial owners of the freight to be shipped), academic institutions, government entities, and non-profit trade associations.

Unlike single transportation modes, global and domestic intermodal freight supply chains are comprised of separate entities that work together to complete each intermodal movement. Truck movements are an essential link in the intermodal supply chain and each container's journey requires multiple drivers to complete a combined total of 98 million intermodal trucking moves annually.

Recognizing the broad range of issues under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction, IANA looks forward to working with you to advance policies in the next surface transportation authorization law that increase intermodal supply chain efficiency, support the industry's essential workforce, and foster economic growth and competitiveness. An overview of the Association's most pressing policy principles related to trucking can be found below.

Workforce

According to the American Trucking Associations (ATA), in 2023, the trucking industry faced a shortage of roughly 60,000 drivers. ATA further projects that the industry must recruit more than 1 million new drivers over the next decade to replace an aging workforce and keep pace with growing freight demand. Given these estimates, IANA encourages Congress to advance legislation that supports the retention of the existing trucking workforce, reduces regulatory burdens, and incentivizes new drivers to enter the industry.

Presently, drivers must be at least 21 years old to operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) in interstate commerce. This age barrier serves as a deterrent for 18-to 21-year-olds who are interested in entering the workforce. Frequently, these individuals undergo training and apprenticeship in other fields before their age qualifies them to operate a CMV in interstate commerce. IANA supports federal efforts that would allow drivers between the ages of 18 and 21 to enter the interstate workforce, while maintaining safety objectives.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) took a critical step in creating a career pathway for the next generation of interstate CMV drivers by establishing the Safe Driver

Apprenticeship Program (SDAP) under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The pilot program allows qualified younger drivers to operate in interstate commerce and ensures participants satisfy comprehensive training and safety standards. Unfortunately, the addition of extraneous requirements, beyond what is written in law, has hampered participation in the program by both motor carriers and drivers. To maximize the potential of the SDAP and the future trucking workforce, we encourage Congress to build on its important work under the IIJA by steering the program back on course and ensure it is implemented according to Congressional intent.

Another top priority for the intermodal industry is to preserve the independent contractor model, which allows truck drivers to enjoy maximum flexibility by choosing the hours and routes that best align with their personal circumstances and preferences. While not directly under the Committee’s jurisdiction, we hope to count on your support for this important issue that stands to impact approximately 400,000 independent truck drivers and an estimated 80 percent of the intermodal drayage trucking workforce. Although employee driver positions are readily available, these individuals have made the conscious decision to carry out their work as independent owner-operators – investing time and financial resources in their small business, which includes training, regulatory compliance, licensing, insurance, and the purchase of a truck.

To further the trucking industry’s workforce recruitment and retention goals, IANA supports Congressional efforts – such as S. 2228, the Modern Worker Empowerment Act– that empower these hardworking men and women by providing increased certainty and consistency to their classification as independent contractors.

Cargo Theft

In recent years, instances of organized cargo theft and fraud have increased at an alarming rate. According to CargoNet’s annual analysis, reported cargo theft incidents rose 27 percent between 2023 and 2024 across the United States and Canada. Demonstrating the rise of premeditation, CargoNet estimates that instances of strategic theft – which involve the use of fraud and deception in addition to, or in place of, physically stealing cargo – have risen by over 1,500 percent since the first quarter of 2021. Fraud and deception tactics may include identify theft, forged bills of lading, and advanced cyber tactics.

It is important to note that crime statistics represent reported theft, as the occurrence is not always reported for a host of reasons, including reputational brand management, tedious paperwork, fear of increased insurance costs, and low cargo recovery rates. Knowledge that cargo theft is vastly underreported leads to a wide span of loss estimates, ranging from \$455 million annually to several billion dollars.

It is likely that theft, fraud, and cyber-security attacks aimed at freight transportation will require a host of solutions, and we applaud Congress for its dedication to identifying bipartisan approaches, such as S. 1404, the Combating Organized Retail Crime Act and S. 337, the Household Goods Shipping Consumer Protection Act. Both of these bills would make meaningful changes at the federal level to identify, prosecute, and deter cargo theft. A coordinated, national response is needed to address this growing threat by improving enforcement capabilities and fostering increased collaboration across relevant federal, state, and local agencies.

Truck Size and Weight

In 1991, Congress froze truck size and weight limits on federal highways. The intermodal industry wholly adopted this standard and, accordingly, built trailers and containers in compliance with federal law. Any changes to these long-standing regulations will upend intermodal operations, sending a ripple effect across the entire supply chain as intermodal equipment is carefully designed for safe and efficient transport by water, rail, and road.

Intermodal Connectors

Despite constituting less than one percent of total National Highway System (NHS) mileage, NHS-designated intermodal connectors play an outsized role in freight network fluidity. These connectors provide necessary links to seaports, rail facilities, and airports that allow for seamless interaction between transportation modes and are essential to the movement of goods between points of origin and destination. According to a 2017 study by the Federal Highway Administration, only nine percent of intermodal connectors are classified as in good or very good condition. Under the next surface transportation reauthorization, IANA strongly supports continued eligibility and robust funding made available for improvements to intermodal connectors under federal formula and discretionary programs.

Thank you for your time and your leadership in support of intermodal goods movement and its related issues. It is our hope that IANA can be a resource as Congress continues developing reauthorization legislation. We look forward to working with you and would welcome the opportunity to further engage with your offices. If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at areinke@intermodal.org or 301-982-3400.