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Dear Friends,
We hope you have had a safe and enjoyable summer. Ours has been busy and productive working toward improved truck safety. We would like to update you on our recent activities and on the status of several safety rule-making.

This summer, we met with representatives from numerous Congressional offices to discuss the marked decline in truck safety, solicit support for the speed governor rule, and advocate for the required use of automatic emergency braking technology on all new big rigs. We attended these meetings along with representatives from The Trucking Alliance, Truckload Carriers Association, Truck Safety Coalition, and Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. We were pleased with our reception and look forward to continuing these conversations in the coming months. Having face-to-face meetings helps us foster stronger bonds with members of the trucking industry as well as with key members of Congress.

Through our discussions about the final speed limiter rule, we learned that many with whom we met were unaware of the numerous delays in addressing this need over the past eleven years. Several Congressional offices have committed to contact the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to determine the reasons for delaying this life-saving, cost-effective mandate. See article on page two for additional details. We also requested that members of Congress contact the DOT concerning the status of the automatic emergency braking rule which has seen no further action, as far as we know, since NHTSA agreed to begin rule-making in 2015. Please contact your representatives in Congress via our website, www.roadsafeamerica.org, to indicate your support for these safety items.

In other news, we are disappointed with two recent developments concerning truck safety. The Administration has withdrawn rule-making which would increase the minimum level of insurance required per truck per incident as well as a requirement to screen and test truck drivers for sleep apnea. These two initiatives are directly related to truck safety and the safety of the motoring public.

Sleep apnea continues to be a major health issue among truckers and it presents serious consequences if it is not addressed. Sleep apnea can cause truckers to become drowsy while driving and increases the risk of a crash. In addition, insurance minimums for large trucks have not been adjusted since they were set nearly four decades ago, not even for inflation. Consequently, the minimum level of $750,000 per event (not per claimant) enables unsafe trucking companies to neglect the safety of their trucks. A more reasonable minimum level of insurance would mean financial accountability and ultimately eliminate companies that compromise safety for profit.

We will continue to keep truck safety issues in front of trucking industry leaders and policy-makers. Our families deserve safely-driven big rigs on our roads.

Sincerely,

Susan and Steve Owings
Co-Founders
The current Administration recently released a Unified Agenda that identified the heavy vehicle speed limiter rule-making as a long-term action item. This means that the agencies are requiring a minimum of 12 months to produce their next action. In other words, this is yet another delay. With our supporters in Washington, DC, other truck safety organizations, and our partners in the trucking industry RSA is reaffirming its commitment to making this rule a reality.

Slowing down speeding big rigs should be a priority to make our highways safer. Research and studies done by the federal government confirm this. NHTSA data shows that trucking is getting less safe: crashes involving large trucks have increased by 45%, injuries resulting from crashes increased 57%, and truck crash fatalities went up 20% from 2009-2015. An FMCSA study concluded that trucks not using speed governors were involved in high-speed collisions at twice the rate of trucks that were using them. In addition, a study released by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) found the crash rate of speeding trucks dropped by 73% after their heavy vehicle speed limiter mandate took effect in Ontario and fatalities in all crashes involving big rigs dropped 24% in the same time frame.

Given these compelling statistics and the fact that speed-limiting devices have been built into most large trucks dating back to the 1990s, there is no reasonable explanation for any more delays to enact this rule for ALL of our heaviest trucks.

As NTSB noted in a recently released report, Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles, mandating heavy vehicle speed limiters is a commonsense and cost-effective solution that will prevent injuries and save lives in crashes involving large trucks. RSA insists that regulators speed up the release of this lifesaving and injury-preventing rule.
Congratulations to these shining safety stars!

Road Safe America annually recognizes approximately one hundred professional truck drivers who exemplify the highest safety standards and have recorded impressive safety records. Although the trucking industry has its own recognition programs, Road Safe America believes it is important that an independent, unbiased, safety advocate also highlight safety achievements.

RSA recently recognized Charley Endorf and Michael Sheeds for their impeccable driving records. Coincidentally, both of these men are employed by Werner Enterprises. With forty years of trucking experience, Charley Endorf has been accident-free for 5.5 million miles and recently won the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance’s annual International Driver Excellence Award that recognizes individuals who go above and beyond the responsibilities of their job as a driver to distinguish themselves through the achievement of safe operation and compliance. Endorf challenged all professional truck drivers to “get our act together, and let’s show the world we are who we are, on and off the highway.”

Michael Sheeds has been accident-free for 26 years while driving over 3.4 million miles. He even has a truck stop named after him, The Petrol in San Antonio, Texas is the “Michael Sheeds Shopping Center.”

There are about 7 million U.S. professional truck drivers moving 16.1 billion tons of freight worth $14.9 trillion each year. Without the trucking industry, America’s economy would come to a grinding halt. RSA believes that truck driving professionals should be compensated and respected in a way which is commensurate with this scale. RSA promotes safe, healthy, well-trained, alert trucking professionals and seeks to improve the compensation and lifestyle of the men and women who deliver the goods America needs every day.

Visit our website at roadsafeamerica.org to learn more about driver education and driver compensation methods that RSA supports.

Consider these numbers:

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State of the art safety technology has been standard issue in passenger cars for years. Finally, safety technologies such as automatic emergency braking, electronic stability control and lane departure systems are now available on tractor-trailers. However, less than 10% of big rigs have automatic emergency braking or lane departure systems and only about one-third of tractor-trailers use electronic stability control.

Trucks with collision avoidance systems called automatic emergency braking, electronic stability control and lane departure warning experienced significant reductions in rear-end collisions, unsafe following distance, and improper lane changes. When incidents such as these are reduced, the potential for injuries and deaths also declines.

The use of automatic emergency braking reduces rear-end collisions by 71% and increases safe following distance by 63%. Using lane departure warning systems reduces potentially dangerous improper lane changes by 46%. This means lane departure warning systems can potentially reduce 1,000 to 2,500 single vehicle lane departure collisions and 2,000 to 4,000 sideswipes annually. Electronic stability control technology can prevent 40-56% of rollovers and prevent about 2,000 crashes annually. RSA advocates for broader use of this technology which can have an enormous impact on highway safety.

Statistical sources include NHTSA and the Truck Safety Coalition.