

August 11, 2021

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
United States Department of Commerce
1410 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

The Pandemic made clear that the nation's supply chains are crucial to the economic well-being of the country. The supply chains were crucial in the immediate response to the crisis and are now even more crucial as the nation develops resilient, diverse, and secure supply chains for critical goods movement for the future. The vital common link for domestic operations and distribution among our air, sea, and land ports is effective truck transportation.

The shortage of truck drivers was profound in 2019 when the Advisory Committee on Supply Chain Competitiveness recommended that the US Department of Commerce take a leadership role in addressing the issue. The demands, during the pandemic and now, have exacerbated the shortage, which has likely reached an all-time high.

In light of the reviews directed by and actions that may be undertaken under Executive Order (E.O.) 14017 "America's Supply Chains," as well as the proposed INVEST in America Act, we respectively recommend that **the US Department of Commerce take a leadership role to coordinate federal agencies to immediately address the driver shortage that threatens the effectiveness of the nation's critical supply chains.**

We recommend a two-pronged approach to address the growing shortage:

- ***Facilitate the pathways to becoming an interstate truck driver*** by expanding the demographic pools attracted to the profession and increasing driver training and apprenticeship programs. Efforts such as the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Under 21 pilot program for military drivers and the proposed DRIVE SAFE Act could effectively and safely bring younger individuals into the driver pool. Outreach to under-represented demographics and communities can be enhanced through agency and private sector collaborations. For example, the City of Newark, New Jersey is working with the US Department of Labor, the seaport community, trucking organizations, and academic institutions to implement a new Commercial Driver's License program as well as other transportation, logistics and transportation training, that will connect participants immediately with employers.
- ***Improve the driver experience*** through addressing truck parking shortages and safety concerns. Research by the American Trucking Associations and others have shown that increasing pay alone will not attract and retain drivers. Improving the work environment can greatly help. For example, safe and legal truck parking is needed so that drivers are not forced to risk their safety by parking on road shoulders or in the lots of abandoned

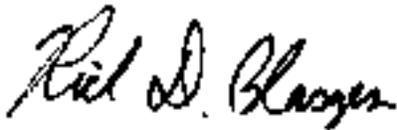
buildings and closed businesses. The American Transportation Research Institute's research found that, on average, drivers spend nearly an hour of driving time every day trying to find parking, and that nearly 60 percent of drivers say they have parked in unauthorized or unsafe locations at least three times a week. The proposed INVEST in America Act would include provisions that could pave the way for \$1 billion in grants to enhance states' resources for truck parking. While the bill has many other provisions unrelated to the driver shortage, the ACSCC supports increased funding for truck parking and recommends the Secretary seek opportunities to actively support the concept of increased grants. Similarly, workplace safety measures at facilities where cargo is picked up and delivered can be explored and encouraged.

The proposed DRIVE SAFE Act also incorporates the use of safety technologies into truck equipment. Such technologies, being introduced into passenger vehicles, can be encouraged by federal agencies. Further, certain semi-automation and environmental technologies being tested for the new generation of trucks can help change the driver experience.

Being a truck driver, especially one who moves goods long distances, can be a challenging occupation. However, these drivers are essential for the well-being, effectiveness and resilience of the nation's supply chains.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendation. The Advisory Committee on Supply Chain Competitiveness stands ready to assist you and the Department to move forward.

Respectfully submitted,



Rick D. Blasgen
Former President and CEO
Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals
Chair, Advisory Committee on Supply Chain
Competitiveness



Rick Gabrielson
President
RS Gabrielson and Associates
Vice Chair, Advisory Committee on Supply
Chain Competitiveness
Chair, Freight Movement Policy and
Infrastructure Subcommittee