Truck Weight Reform

Position
While there is a great deal of discussion taking place about much needed infrastructure investment, there are also steps that can be taken to make more efficient use of the current freight transportation network. International Paper supports legislation that allows companies to safely and more efficiently ship their products using fewer truck loads. This issue remains critical for manufacturers like IP because of tight truck capacity driven by high truck demand.

Policy Request
Support truck weight reform efforts in Congress and at the state levels of government.

Issue Background
IP-supported truck weight reform legislation at the federal level of government would give states the option to increase their interstate weight limits from 80,000 lbs to 91,000 lbs. for tractor-trailers fitted with an additional (6th) axle and brakes. The additional axle maintains braking and weight-per-tire specifications so trucks can safely carry more freight. These trucks are the exact same 53-foot configuration, but simply more safe and efficient with improved braking capability due to the 6th axle.

Currently, the trucks leaving IP’s mills have 8-10 feet of empty space in them because we weigh out before we fill up our trucks. By allowing states to raise their interstate weight limits to 91,000 lbs. for trucks fitted with and extra axle and brakes, we could reduce our number of truck trips needed to carry the same amount of product.

More than 40 states already have weight exemptions on their state roads—some as high as 120,000 pounds—so heavier trucks are already successfully in the supply chain. The 91,000-pound truck we are seeking is a moderate increase and U.S. DOT confirmed it is federal bridge formula compliant.

Safety is our top priority at International Paper and for all stakeholders in freight transportation. By adding the extra axle and brakes, a 53-foot truck’s stopping distance at 65 mph is improved by one foot over the currently allowed 80,000 lbs. on 5 axles. By removing trucks from the road, the opportunity for accidents is also reduced.

With passage of 91,000 lb., six-axle truck weight reform legislation, International Paper:
- In Alabama, would need 5,400 fewer annual truck trips.
- In Georgia, would need 2,700 fewer annual truck trips.
- In Iowa, would need 9,200 fewer annual truck trips.
- If all states opted in, IP would need 56,000 fewer truck trips annually.

IP U.S. Transportation Facts
- **Rail** - Largest U.S. box car shipper: 150,000+ carloads annually.
- **Marine** - 3rd Largest waterborne exporter by volume: 285,000+ TEU’s (20 foot equivalent containers) shipped annually.
- **Truck** - 1.5+ million truckloads sent annually.