RESOLUTION OF THE MISSISSIPPI TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION DECLARING THEIR OPPOSITION OF THE POLICY RIDER TO THE TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT FISCAL YEAR 2016 APPROPRIATIONS BILL REGARDING THE PROVISION TO ALLOW TRUCK DRIVERS TO WORK LONGER HOURS, HAUL LARGER DOUBLE TRAILERS (TWIN 33s) IN EVERY STATE AND PREVENT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FROM RAISING MINIMUM INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FROM THE CURRENT STANDARDS

WHEREAS, Twin 33s are a truck tractor pulling two 33-foot trailers, for a total truck-trailer combination length of at least 84 feet;

WHEREAS, a federal mandate for Twin 33 foot trailer trucks will preempt state laws in states that do not want them, overriding state legislative decisions to protect public safety;

WHEREAS, on average 4,000 people are killed and 100,000 more are injured in truck crashes annually;

WHEREAS, double trailer trucks have an 11 percent higher fatal crash rate than single trailer trucks;

WHEREAS, longer trailer trucks result in more off-tracking into other lanes of traffic;

WHEREAS, longer trailer trucks pose a greater risk of severe crashes as they enter and exit highways and local roads;

WHEREAS, longer trailer trucks will result in less efficient intermodal freight transportation;

WHEREAS, extending the truck driver work week to a maximum of 82 hours is dangerous to both the drivers and the traveling public;

WHEREAS, the minimum insurance requirement standards haven’t been changed since 1985 and this mandate would prevent them from being increased;
BE IT RESOLVED by the Mississippi Transportation Commission that they hereby declare their opposition to the policy rider to the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations Bill regarding the provision to allow truck drivers to work longer hours, haul larger double trailers (Twin33s) in every state and prevent the U.S. Department of Transportation from raising minimum insurance requirements from the current standards;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mississippi Transportation Commission’s priority is the safety of the Mississippi traveling public.

ORDERED this the 23rd day of June, 2015.

[Signatures]
April 30, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
United States Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2402

Dear Senator Cochran:

On behalf of the Mississippi Transportation Commission, we are writing in opposition to provisions we understand may be included in the FY 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) bill in the Senate Committee on Appropriations that would require the State of Mississippi to allow longer double-trailer trucks on its roads. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, we hope you will oppose any such provisions because these longer double-trailer trucks, often referred to as “Twin 33s,” would endanger motorists, worsen our crumbling roads and increase the fiscal burden shouldered by Mississippi taxpayers.

This law if passed would require the State of Mississippi to allow longer double-trailer trucks—measuring 88 to 91 feet in length—onto all miles of Interstate and National Network routes statewide. In other words, the State of Mississippi would have no say in the matter. If longer-truck proponents desire the authority to operate longer double-trailer trucks and can demonstrate why Mississippians should permit them, they should present their agenda to the Mississippi Transportation Commission and State Legislature to make their case—not to the Federal government.

We have attached a map of these National Network routes for your review so you can see how widespread these bigger-truck operations would be. It is troubling to envision an 88-foot long double-trailer truck hauling from Walnut to Beaumont down State Highway 15, much less the extensive cluster of National Network routes that crisscross the State. These roads have difficulty handling the shorter double-trailer trucks today, and will surely bear extensive damage from even longer trucks. Complicating this problem is the last thing our roads need, and Mississippi taxpayers are unlikely to support an unfunded mandate from the Federal government.
We also know that there are efforts in Washington to allow heavier single-trailer trucks, as well as triple-trailer trucks. The State of Mississippi is unwavering in its years-long position: We oppose changes in the Federal law that would allow increases in truck size or weight. We face an infrastructure crisis as it stands now, with 3,565 structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridges in Mississippi—over 20 percent of all bridges statewide.

We urge you to oppose any efforts to insert the so-called “Twin 33s” provision in the THUD bill, and please oppose other efforts to increase the size or weight of trucks on Mississippi highways.

Sincerely,

Dick Hall
Chairman
Mississippi Transportation Commission

Mike Tagert
Commissioner, Northern District
Mississippi Transportation Commission

Tom King
Commissioner, Southern District
Mississippi Transportation Commission

cc: Cindy Mills, CABT Regional Director
Enclosure: Mississippi National Network map