To amend titles 23 and 49, United States Code, to modify provisions relating to the length and weight limitations for vehicles operating on Federal-aid highways, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 9, 2013

Mr. McGovern (for himself, Mr. Capuano, Mr. Nadler, and Mr. Wolf) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To amend titles 23 and 49, United States Code, to modify provisions relating to the length and weight limitations for vehicles operating on Federal-aid highways, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
atives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013”.
SEC. 2. OPERATION OF RESTRICTED PROPERTY-CARRYING UNITS ON NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM.

(a) Definition of Restricted Property-Carrying Unit.—Section 31111(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (5);

(2) by redesigning paragraph (2) as paragraph (3);

(3) by redesigning paragraph (4) as paragraph (2); and

(4) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

“(4) Restricted property-carrying unit.—The term ‘restricted property-carrying unit’ means any trailer, semitrailer, container, or other property-carrying unit that is longer than 53 feet.”.

(b) Prohibition on Operation of Restricted Property-Carrying Units.—

(1) In general.—Section 31111(b)(1)(C) of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(C) allows operation on any segment of the National Highway System, including the Interstate System, of a restricted property-carrying unit unless
the operation is specified on the list published under subsection (h)(2);”.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) LIMITATIONS.—Section 31111 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) RESTRICTED PROPERTY-CARRYING UNITS.—

“(1) APPLICABILITY OF PROHIBITION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (b)(1)(C), a restricted property-carrying unit may continue to operate on a segment of the National Highway System if the operation of the unit is specified on the list published under paragraph (2).

“(B) APPLICABILITY OF STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS.—All operations specified on the list published under paragraph (2) shall continue to be subject to all State laws, limitations, and conditions, including routing-specific, commodity-specific, and configuration-specific designations and all other restrictions, in effect as of June 1, 2008.
“(C) **Firefighting units.**—Subsection (b)(1)(C) shall not apply to the operation of a restricted property-carrying unit that is used exclusively for firefighting.

“(2) **Listing of restricted property-carrying units.**—

“(A) **In general.**—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013, the Secretary shall initiate a proceeding to determine and publish a list of restricted property-carrying units that were—

“(i) authorized by State officials pursuant to State law as of June 1, 2008; and

“(ii) in actual and lawful operation on a regular or periodic basis (including seasonal operations) on or before June 1, 2008.

“(B) **Limitation.**—A restricted property-carrying unit may not be included on the list published under subparagraph (A) on the basis that a State law could have authorized the operation of the unit as of a prior date, by permit or otherwise.
“(C) Publication of final list.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013, the Secretary shall publish a final list of restricted property-carrying units described in subparagraph (A).

“(D) Updates.—The Secretary shall update the list published under subparagraph (C) as necessary to reflect new designations made to the National Highway System.

“(3) Applicability of prohibition.—The prohibition established under subsection (b)(1)(C) shall—

“(A) apply to any new designation made to the National Highway System; and

“(B) remain in effect on those portions of the National Highway System that cease to be designated as part of the National Highway System.

“(4) Limitation on statutory construction.—Nothing in this subsection may be construed to prevent a State from further restricting in any manner or prohibiting the operation of a restricted property-carrying unit, except that any such restric-
tion or prohibition shall be consistent with the provi-
sions of this subchapter.”.

(d) ENFORCEMENT.—The second sentence of section 141(a) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “section 31112” and inserting “sections 31111 and 31112”.

SEC. 3. OPERATION OF LONGER COMBINATION VEHICLES ON NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 31112 of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (g) and (h), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (e) the fol-

lowing:

“(f) NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A State may not allow, on a segment of the National Highway System that is not covered under subsection (b) or (c), the opera-
tion of a commercial motor vehicle combination (ex-
cept a vehicle or load that cannot be dismantled eas-
ily or divided easily and that has been issued a spe-
cial permit under applicable State law) with more than 1 property-carrying unit (excluding the truck tractor) if the property-carrying units are more than—
“(A) the maximum combination trailer, semitrailer, or other type of length limitation allowed by applicable State law as of June 1, 2008; or

“(B) the length of the property-carrying units of those commercial motor vehicle combinations, by specific configuration, in actual and lawful operation on a regular or periodic basis (including continuing seasonal operation) in that State on or before June 1, 2008.

“(2) ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS.—

“(A) APPLICABILITY OF STATE RESTRICTIONS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), a commercial motor vehicle combination that is not prohibited from operating in a State under paragraph (1) may continue to operate in that State on highways described in paragraph (1) if such operation complies with all applicable State laws, limitations, and conditions, including routing-specific and configuration-specific designations, and all other restrictions in effect in that State as of June 1, 2008.
“(ii) MINOR ADJUSTMENTS.—Subject to regulations promulgated by the Secretary under subsection (h), a State may make minor temporary and emergency adjustments to route designations and vehicle operating restrictions in effect as of June 1, 2008, for specific safety purposes and road construction.

“(B) ADDITIONAL STATE RESTRICTIONS.—Nothing in this subsection may be construed to prevent a State from further restricting or prohibiting the operation of a commercial motor vehicle combination subject to this section, except that such a restriction or prohibition shall be consistent with this section and sections 31113(a), 31113(b), and 31114.

“(C) MINOR ADJUSTMENTS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which a State makes a minor adjustment of a temporary and emergency nature in accordance with subparagraph (A)(ii) or further restricting or prohibiting the operation of a commercial motor vehicle combination in accord-
ance with subparagraph (B), the State
shall advise the Secretary of the action.

“(ii) Publication.—The Secretary
shall publish a notice of an action taken by
a State under clause (i) in the Federal
Register.

“(3) List of State Length Limitations.—

“(A) State Submissions.—

“(i) In General.—Not later than 30
days after the date of the enactment of the
Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preser-
vation Act of 2013, each State shall sub-
mit to the Secretary a complete list of
State length limitations applicable to com-
mercial motor vehicle combinations oper-
ating in the State on the highways de-
scribed in paragraph (1), including the ap-
licable State laws associated with the
length limitations.

“(ii) Failure to Submit.—If a State
fails to submit the information required
under clause (i), the Secretary shall com-
pile and file the information on behalf of
the State.
“(B) Publication of interim list.—
The Secretary shall—

“(i) publish an interim list in the Federal Register consisting of all information submitted under subparagraph (A) not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013;

“(ii) review for accuracy all information submitted by a State under subparagraph (A); and

“(iii) solicit and consider public comment on the accuracy of the information.

“(C) Limitation.—A law may not be included on the list submitted by a State or published by the Secretary merely because the law authorized, or could have authorized, by permit or otherwise, the operation of commercial motor vehicle combinations not in actual operation on a regular or periodic basis on or before June 1, 2008.

“(D) Publication of final list.—

“(i) In general.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preser-
vation Act of 2013, the Secretary shall publish a final version of the list described in subparagraph (B) in the Federal Register, as revised under this subparagraph or subparagraph (E).

“(ii) REVISIONS.—In publishing the final list, the Secretary shall make any revisions necessary to correct inaccuracies identified under subparagraph (B).

“(iii) PROHIBITION ON OPERATION.—After the final list is published under this subparagraph, commercial motor vehicle combinations prohibited under paragraph (1) may not operate on a highway described in paragraph (1) unless included on the list.

“(E) INACCURACIES.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—On the motion of the Secretary or on request by any person (including a State), the Secretary shall review the list published under subparagraph (D).

“(ii) DETERMINATION.—If the Secretary determines that there is reason to
believe a mistake was made in the accuracy
of the list—

“(I) the Secretary shall begin a
proceeding to determine whether a
mistake was made; and

“(II) if the Secretary makes an
affirmative determination under sub-
clause (I), the Secretary shall publish
the appropriate correction.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 31112 of
title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)(1), by striking “subsection
(g)(2) of this section” and inserting “subsection
(h)(2)”;

(2) in subsection (g), as redesignated by sub-
section (a)(1)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “or
127A(e)” after “127(d)”;

(B) in paragraph (3), by inserting “(or
June 1, 2008, with respect to highways de-
scribed in subsection (f)(1))” after “June 2,
1991”; and

(3) in paragraph (h)(2), as redesignated by
subsection (a)—
(A) by striking “Not later than June 15, 1992, the Secretary” and inserting “The Secretary”; and

(B) by striking “of this section” and inserting “or (f)”.

SEC. 4. TERMINATION OF DETERMINATIONS OF GRANDFATHERED RIGHTS.

(a) In General.—Section 127 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(i) Grandfathered Rights.—

“(1) Definition of Interstate weight limit.—In this subsection and in section 127A, the term ‘Interstate weight limit’ means the 80,000-pound gross vehicle weight limitation, the 20,000-pound single axle weight limitation (including enforcement tolerances), the 34,000-pound tandem axle weight limitation (including enforcement tolerances), and the overall maximum gross weight (including enforcement tolerances) limitation on a group of 2 or more consecutive axles produced by application of the formula under subsection (a)(2).

“(2) Limitation.—Beginning 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013, a State may
not allow, on a segment of the Interstate System, the operation of a vehicle or combination (other than a longer combination vehicle) exceeding an Interstate weight limit unless the operation is specified on the list published under paragraph (3).

“(3) LIST OF VEHICLES AND COMBINATIONS.—

“(A) PROCEEDING.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall initiate a proceeding to determine and publish a list of vehicles and combinations (other than longer combination vehicles) otherwise exceeding an Interstate weight limit that the Department of Transportation, any other Federal agency, or a State has determined, on or before June 1, 2008, could have been or could be lawfully operated within the State—

“(i) on July 1, 1956;

“(ii) in the case of the overall gross weight of any group of 2 or more consecutive axles, on January 4, 1975; or

“(iii) under a special rule applicable to a State under subsection (a).

“(B) LIMITATIONS.—
“(i) Actual and lawful operations required.—An operation of a vehicle or combination may be included on the list published under subparagraph (A) only if the vehicle or combination was in actual and lawful operation in the State on a regular or periodic basis on or before June 1, 2008.

“(ii) State authority not sufficient.—An operation of a vehicle or combination may not be included on the list published under subparagraph (A) on the basis that a State law could have authorized the operation of the vehicle or combination as of a prior date by permit or otherwise.

“(C) Publication of final list.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall publish a final list of vehicles and combinations described in subparagraph (A).

“(4) Limitation on effect of subsection.—

“(A) In general.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), nothing in this subsection
may be construed to prevent a State from re-
ducing the gross vehicle weight limitation, the
single and tandem axle weight limitations, or
the overall maximum gross weight on a group
of 2 or more consecutive axles applicable to por-
tions of the Interstate System in the State for
operations on the list published under para-
graph (3)(C).

“(B) LIMITATION.—A reduction described
in subparagraph (A) may not result in a limita-
tion that is less than an Interstate weight limit.

“(5) APPLICABILITY OF EXISTING REQUIRE-
MENTS.—All vehicles and combinations included on
the list published under paragraph (3) shall be sub-
ject to all routing-specific, commodity-specific, and
weight-specific designations in effect in a State as of
June 1, 2008.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 127(a)(4)
of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking
“the State determines”.

SEC. 5. NONDIVISIBLE LOAD PROCEEDING.

Section 127 of title 23, United States Code, as
amended by section 4, is further amended by adding at
the end the following:

“(j) NONDIVISIBLE LOADS.—
“(1) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—The purpose of this subsection is to promote conformity with Interstate weight limits to preserve publicly funded infrastructure and protect motorists by limiting maximum vehicle weight on key portions of the Federal-aid highway system.

“(2) PROCEEDING.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013, the Secretary shall initiate a proceeding to define the term ‘vehicles and loads that cannot be easily dismantled or divided’ as used in subsection (a) and section 31112 of title 49.

“(3) LIST OF COMMODITIES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The definition developed under subparagraph (A) shall include a list of commodities (or classes or types of commodities) that do not qualify as nondivisible loads.

“(B) LIMITATION.—The list of commodities developed under paragraph (2) shall not be interpreted to be a comprehensive list of commodities that do not qualify as nondivisible loads.

“(4) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall—
“(A) promulgate final regulations setting forth the determination of the Secretary made under paragraph (2) not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013; and

“(B) update such regulations, as necessary.

“(5) APPLICABILITY.—Regulations promulgated under paragraph (4) shall apply to all vehicles and loads operating on the National Highway System.

“(6) STATE REQUIREMENTS.—A State may establish any requirement that is not inconsistent with regulations promulgated under paragraph (4).”.

SEC. 6. WAIVERS OF WEIGHT LIMITATIONS DURING PERIODS OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY.

Section 127 of title 23, United States Code, as amended by sections 4 and 5, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(k) WAIVERS DURING PERIODS OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or section 127A, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, may waive or limit the application of any vehi-
cle weight limit established under this section or sec-

tion 127A with respect to a highway route during a

period of national emergency in order to respond to

the effects of the national emergency.

“(2) APPLICABILITY.—Emergency limits estab-

lished under paragraph (1) shall preempt any incon-

sistent State vehicle weight limits.”

SEC. 7. VEHICLE WEIGHT LIMITATIONS—NATIONAL HIGH-

WAY SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 23, United

States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 127(d)(4), by inserting “and in

section 127A” after “this section”; and

(2) by inserting after section 127 the following:

“§127A. Vehicle weight limitations—National High-

way System

“(a) NON-INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS ON NATIONAL

HIGHWAY SYSTEM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning 90 days after

the date of the enactment of the Safe Highways and

Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013, any Inter-

state weight limit that applies to vehicles and com-

binations (other than longer combination vehicles) 

operating on the Interstate System in a State under 

section 127 shall apply to vehicles and combinations
(other than longer combination vehicles) operating on non-Interstate segments of the National Highway System in the State unless the segments are subject to lower State weight limits as provided for under subsection (d).

“(2) EXISTING HIGHWAYS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), in the case of a non-Interstate segment of the National Highway System that is open to traffic on June 1, 2008, a State may allow the operation of any vehicle or combination (other than a longer combination vehicle) on the segment that the Secretary determines under subsection (b) could have been lawfully operated on the segment on June 1, 2008.

“(B) APPLICABILITY OF STATE LAWS.—All operations described in subparagraph (A) shall continue to be subject to all State laws, limitations, and conditions, including routing-specific, commodity-specific, and configuration-specific designations and all other restrictions, in effect as of June 1, 2008.

“(3) NEW HIGHWAYS.—Subject to subsection (d)(1), the gross vehicle weight limitations and axle loading limitations applicable to all vehicles and
combinations (other than longer combination vehicles) on a non-Interstate segment of the National Highway System that was not open to traffic on June 1, 2008, shall be the Interstate weight limit.

“(b) LISTING OF VEHICLES AND COMBINATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall initiate a proceeding to determine and publish a list of vehicles and combinations (other than longer combination vehicles), otherwise exceeding an Interstate weight limit, that could be lawfully operated on a non-Interstate segment of the National Highway System on June 1, 2008.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In publishing a list of vehicles and combinations under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall identify—

“(A) the gross vehicle weight limitations and axle loading limitations in each State applicable, as of June 1, 2008, to vehicles and combinations (other than longer combination vehicles) on non-Interstate segments of the National Highway System; and

“(B) operations of vehicles and combinations (other than longer combination vehicles), exceeding State gross vehicle weight limitations and axle loading limitations identified under
subparagraph (A), that were in actual and law-
ful operation on a regular or periodic basis (in-
cluding seasonal operations) as of June 1,
2008.

“(3) LIMITATION.—An operation of a vehicle or
combination may not be included on the list pub-
lished under paragraph (1) on the basis that a State
law (including a regulation) could have authorized
the operation on a prior date by permit or otherwise.

“(4) PUBLICATION OF FINAL LIST.—Not later
than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the
Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act
of 2013, the Secretary shall publish a final list of ve-
hicles and combinations described in paragraph (1).

“(5) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall update
the list published under paragraph (4) as necessary
to reflect new designations made to the National
Highway System.

“(c) APPLICABILITY OF LIMITATIONS.—The limita-
tions established under subsection (a) shall—

“(1) apply to any new designation made to the
National Highway System; and

“(2) remain in effect on those non-Interstate
highways that cease to be designated as part of the
National Highway System.
“(d) Limitations on Statutory Construction.—

“(1) State enforcement of more restrictive weight limits.—Nothing in this section may be construed to prevent a State from maintaining or imposing a weight limitation that is more restrictive than the Interstate weight limit on vehicles or combinations (other than longer combination vehicles) operating on a non-Interstate segment of the National Highway System.

“(2) State actions to reduce weight limits.—Nothing in this section may be construed to prevent a State from reducing the gross vehicle weight limitation, single or tandem axle weight limitations, or the overall maximum gross weight on two or more consecutive axles of the State on any non-Interstate segment of the National Highway System.

“(e) Longer Combination Vehicles.—

“(1) Prohibition.—

“(A) In general.—Beginning 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013, a longer combination vehicle may continue to operate on a non-Interstate segment of the National Highway System only if the oper-
ation of the longer combination vehicle configu-
ration type was—

“(i) authorized by State officials pur-
suant to State law (including a regulation) as of June 1, 2008; and

“(ii) in actual and lawful operation on a regular or periodic basis (including sea-
sonal operations) on or before June 1, 2008.

“(B) APPLICABILITY OF STATE LAWS.—All operations described in subparagraph (A) shall continue to be subject to all State laws, limita-
tions, and conditions, including routing-specific, commodity-specific, and configuration-specific designations and all other restrictions, in effect as of June 1, 2008.

“(2) LISTING OF VEHICLES AND COMBINA-
tions.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013, the Secretary shall initiate a pro-
ceeding to determine and publish a list of longer combination vehicles that could be law-
fully operated on non-Interstate segments of the National Highway System as of June 1, 2008.

“(B) LIMITATION.—A longer combination vehicle may not be included on the list published under subparagraph (A) on the basis that a State law (including a regulation) could have authorized the operation of the vehicle on a prior date by permit or otherwise.

“(C) PUBLICATION OF FINAL LIST.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act of 2013, the Secretary shall publish a final list of longer combination vehicles described in subparagraph (A).

“(D) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall update the list published under subparagraph (C) as necessary to reflect new designations made to the National Highway System.

“(3) LIMITATION ON STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection may be construed to prevent a State from further restricting in any manner or prohibiting the operation of a longer combination vehicle, except that any such restriction or prohibition shall be consistent with section 127 of
this title and sections 31112 through 31114 of title 49.

“(f) Model Schedule of Fines.—

“(1) In general.—The Secretary, in consultation with the States, shall establish a model schedule of fines to be assessed for violations of this section.

“(2) Purposes.—The purposes of the schedule of fines shall be—

“(A) to ensure that fines are sufficient to deter violations of this section; and

“(B) to permit States to recover costs associated with damage caused to the National Highway System by the operation of vehicles.

“(3) Adoption by States.—The Secretary shall encourage States to adopt the schedule of fines.”.

(b) Enforcement of Requirements.—Section 141(a) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “the Federal-aid primary system, the Federal-aid urban system, and the Federal-aid secondary system, including the Interstate System in accordance with section 127 of this title” and inserting “the National Highway System, including the Interstate System, in accordance with sections 127 and 127A”.
(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The chapter analysis for title 23, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 127 the following:

“127A. Vehicle weight limitations—National Highway System.”.