



Jersey County Engineer Travels to Capitol Hill to Tell Congress “No Bigger Trucks”

by Brad Roseberry

March 28 2023 10:44 AM

JERSEYVILLE – Special interests are lobbying for federal legislation that would put heavier semi-trucks onto local roads in Illinois and across the Country. [A new report](#) being delivered to the U.S. Congress shows that more than 72,000 bridges nationwide cannot safely handle the proposed heavier truck weights. Replacing these bridges would cost taxpayers more than \$60 billion. Here in Illinois, 1,252 bridges would be put at risk, with a replacement cost of more than \$1 billion.



Jersey County Engineer Tom Klasner co-authored a new study and is heading to Capitol Hill on March 29th to tell Congress local taxpayers can't foot the bill. He is joined by leaders from across the country who don't want motorists in their towns to be forced to share the roads with bigger trucks.

Klasner is past President of the Illinois Association of County Engineers and current representative of Illinois to the National Association of County Engineers. Both groups strongly oppose any increases to truck size and weight.

Klasner plans to deliver the report, [*The Impacts of Heavier Trucks on Local Bridges, March 2023*](#), during meetings with Members of the Illinois Congressional delegation, including a meeting with Congresswoman Mary Miller.

“Engineers know that heavier trucks break bridges and bust budgets,” Klasner said. “The numbers we found in this study are eye-popping. The costs to local governments would be astronomical, and Members of Congress must have this information to make informed decisions.”

Key Facts:

- R. 471, a bill that would raise semi-truck weights on interstates and National System roads by five and a half tons, was introduced earlier this year.
- There are over 2,405 bridges in Illinois that are in poor condition. It would cost \$3.6 billion to replace those bridges. (FHWA)
- The average age of bridges in Illinois is 43 years. There are more than 1,900 bridges over 90 years old. (CITE)
- Illinois has the 5th highest number of poor local (non-NHS bridges) in the nation. (National Bridge Inventory)
- Klasner summed it up this way, “If legislators want to vote in favor of heavier trucks, they better be prepared to hand a tax bill for billions in repair costs to local taxpayers.”
- This new study will allow members of Congress to evaluate the impacts of bigger trucks on the bridges in their communities. Since no truck trip starts or stops on the interstate system, these heavier trucks would inevitably find their way onto our local roads. “I am confident that when Members see the results for their constituents, they will vote against bigger trucks,” said Klasner.

Tom Klasner joins like-minded law enforcement officials from other states in making the trip to Washington at the invitation of the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT), a nonprofit grassroots organization opposed to legislation that would make trucks longer or heavier.

CABT is a nonprofit grassroots organization with coalitions of approximately 3,000 local supporters in over 30 states. CABT supporters include law enforcement officers, local elected officials, truck drivers, motorists, safety advocates, railroads and trucking companies. To learn more, please visit www.cabt.org.