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Legislation for Bigger Trucks Raises Myriad of Safety and Financial Concerns

ST. PAUL, MN – A press conference was held today at the Minnesota State Capitol in opposition to legislation that would allow 6-axle, 90,000-pound trucks and 7-axle, 97,000-pound trucks on Minnesota's state and county roads.

The media event was coordinated by the Minnesota Alliance for State Highways and featured a multitude of interested parties who spoke in opposition to the proposed legislation. Among the elected officials who spoke were:

Councilman Myron Bailey (City of Cottage Grove City)
Mayor Mary Herschberger Thun (City of Victoria)
Representative Melissa Hortman (DFL-Brooklyn Park)
Mayor Marvin Johnson (City of Independence/President, League of Minnesota Cities)
Senator Rick Olseen (DFL-Harris)

Others who spoke in opposition included:

AAA of Minnesota
Jim Condon, Truck Driver
The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association
The Minnesota Citizen's League
The Minnesota Women's Federation
The Sierra Club

"This legislation could raise the weight of one truck by 17,000 pounds," stated truck driver Jim Condon. "The increased danger to the truck driver and surrounding vehicles on the road would be quite dramatic, not to mention the increased cost to taxpayers for increased wear and tear on our roads."

The House version of the legislation is included in the Omnibus Transportation Policy bill. On the Senate side, the bill was amended into a separate piece of legislation dealing with forest products that was adopted by the following three Senate Committees: Environment & Natural Resources, Finance and Transportation. It now awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

The Minnesota Regional Railroads Association was formed in 1987 and represents ten smaller railroads that operate about one-fourth of Minnesota's 4,500 route miles of track, plus four Class I carriers that are associated with the MRRA in support of its goals. MRRA carriers provide rail service to more than 160 communities and employ about 500 men and women throughout the state.