

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 25, 2012

The Honorable John L. Mica
Chairman
U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Ranking Member
U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mica and Ranking Member Rahall,

We are writing to request that any highway reauthorization include an exemption for RV motorhomes that would preserve American jobs and maintain safe roadways. The current Federal Bridge Formula sets a maximum gross axle weight of 20,000 pounds for a vehicle's single rear axle. While a single rear axle weight exemption of up to 24,000 lbs. exists for buses, recreation vehicle motorhomes are not covered by that exemption even though they are similar in design.

There are several reasons why motorhomes should be permitted to have a 24,000lb. gross axle weight exemption. The universe of motorhomes that would use an exemption for a 24,000 lb. axle limit is quite small – fewer than 4,000 such rear-engine units are built annually, based on 2010 industry shipment statistics. By comparison, more than 8 million large trucks and 820,000 buses are on the road. Motorhomes and buses have similarly structured chassis, but are finished and used differently. Moreover, motorhomes are still well under the 80,000 lb. gross vehicle weight limit. The heaviest gross vehicle weight rating for the largest motorhome is only about 55,000 pounds. Also, motorhome owners travel on average just 4,500 miles and 24 days annually, according to the study, *RV Consumer Demographic Profile* by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center, and other industry research.

Motorhome weight has increased recently due to the addition of mandatory engine pollution control equipment and enhanced steel safety structures. Permitting motorhomes to use the exemption avoids adding a second rear axle, additional weight, and approximately \$10,000 to the cost of the vehicle, without any perceivable value to the consumer. It is often not feasible to alter the design of a motorhome by adding a second rear axle since it interferes with the vehicle's drive train and under-carriage mounting of water and holding tanks.

The motorhome industry was sorely impacted by the economic downturn, and is not recovering as well as other sectors of the recreation vehicle industry. Permitting the exemption

for motorhomes will enable manufacturers to produce, and dealers to sell, more affordable and desirable motorhomes, resulting in new job creation.

When crafting highway reauthorization legislation, we request that motorhomes are provided with an exemption to the Bridge Formula similar to the bus exemption found in 23 USC 127. This job creating exemption would ensure the gradual growth of the motorhome industry while still guaranteeing the highest quality of motorhome construction.

Thank you for reviewing our request and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Marlin Stutzman
Member of Congress



Mike Pence
Member of Congress



Larry Bucshon
Member of Congress



Joe Donnelly
Member of Congress