



Delivering for Louisiana Since 1939

Louisiana Motor Transport Association, Inc.
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November 14, 2022

The Honorable Shawn Wilson
Secretary, The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

Email: shawn.wilson@la.gov

Dear Secretary Wilson,

The LMTA is writing today to share our concerns regarding the two-lane narrowing for Interstate 10. This is the project to widen the interstate between Hwy 415 and the I-10/12 split, with a portion of that project planned to narrow Interstate 10 to two lanes for one year, starting in 2023 or 2024.

As I am sure that you are aware, the trucking industry is the lifeblood of the state's economy. Nearly 80 percent of Louisianans rely exclusively on trucks to have essential everyday items delivered to them. We are part of the multi-modal commerce that moves goods from water to rail and roads. From picking up freight from the Port of New Orleans to hauling gas and other materials from Sibley, Louisiana, we supply goods across the country. Louisiana truckers are a prominent link in the nation's supply chain with an impact felt across the economy.

The citizens of Louisiana and across the nation realize and recognize the value truckers bring to their daily lives, especially during the pandemic. When the nation shut down, we were still moving, whether that was bringing groceries to stores or delivering vaccinations that so many citizens took advantage of to bring the pandemic to a close. We are not only a valuable part of the state's economy, but we contribute to the state's economy with more than just our deliveries. The trucking industry employs over 90,000 Louisiana citizens. We contribute to the government coffers on the state and federal levels through highway user fees and taxes.

We cannot emphasize enough that having and maintaining adequate infrastructure is a crucial priority for the trucking industry. Louisiana roads are our office, with more hours spent on our state's highways than any other industry. Annually, a truck driver spends over 3,000 hours on the road.

The industry has always and continues to state that a major priority is an adequate road system with the capacity to withstand traffic loads. We wholeheartedly agree with and support infrastructure spending and improvements.

The LMTA agrees that the I-10 widening project is a valuable project that needs to move forward. The legislature held a public hearing recently regarding this project, yet it was stated that it is too late to make any changes because of contractual issues. We believe, however, that an alternative must be found. We implore this administration to seek other solutions.

We detail below some of the issues that we have with the narrowing of the interstate.

- The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration mandates that truckers can only drive 11 hours in a workday, with additional mandated breaks. The increase of traffic and time spent on this portion of I-10 will significantly impact the already tight schedules for drivers and companies.



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- Super loads, a unique trucker who primarily services the chemical corridor, face additional obstacles because of the nature of their load and the inability to take regular alternate routes.
- The driver shortage currently is at 80,000 nationally and will be greatly exacerbated by this issue.
- This will impact the workers that support drivers because it will make it difficult for employees who support the drivers to arrive to work timely.
- Diesel prices are all at an all-time high. This has a real-life impact on owner-operators who are struggling to keep their doors open with record-high gas prices.
- Hurricane preparation for a trucker is a unique situation driven by different issues than a car driver. The lane narrowing will pose massive issues before, during, and after an emergency, for not only truckers, but the larger public.
- Truckers who drive regional routes will be forced to take fewer loads.
- Freight delivery issues for truckers cause capacity issues for shippers.
- Increased time for truckers means an increased cost of goods for all citizens.
- Every minute a trucker spends on the road in congested traffic exposes that trucker to even more lawsuits.

We implore this administration to find alternative solutions to this issue, such as only closing lanes for a specific period of time-day or at night-or implementing a waiver for hours-of-service for the trucking industry.

Our association and members stand ready to meet with you and the DOTD. Over a month ago, we met with your department on this issue, and we did not leave that meeting feeling as if the staff was even aware that this might pose issues for the trucking industry.

We look forward to working with you and hearing your feedback on how we can resolve this issue for the truckers and the industry that delivers for our economy.

Sincerely,

C. Renee Amar
Executive Director

cc: Governor John Bel Edwards
The Honorable Garret Graves, United States Congressional District #6
The Honorable John Kennedy, United States Senate
Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry
American Trucking Associations President, Chris Spears
The Louisiana Legislature, Transportation Committees
LMTA Board of Directors