

NEWS

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Road Safe America says DOT secretary should reconsider Her opposition to speed governor activation on big trucks

ATLANTA – In order to save lives on America’s highways and get in step with the rest of the world, the head of the U.S. Department of Transportation should reconsider her opposition to activation of speed governing devices at 68 mph on tractor trailer trucks, Road Safe America said today.

Mary Peters, DOT Secretary, was quoted in a trucking publication this month as saying she opposes speed governors on big trucks because the speed differential between the trucks and passenger vehicles would be dangerous.

“This is puzzling since 68 mph represents a median speed on our interstate highways,” declared Stephen C. Owings, co-founder of Road Safe America, a non-profit focused on saving lives and reducing injuries resulting from crashes involving cars and big trucks. “To the secretary’s own point, the speed governors would reduce speed differentials by keeping the most dangerous vehicles from driving faster than the median on our interstates. Since these big rigs can’t see, maneuver or stop as well as smaller vehicles with which they share the roads, this is clearly a safe thing to require.”

Road Safe America has a petition pending before the U.S. Department of Transportation to have speed governor activation required on all Class 7 and 8 trucks (over 13 tons in weight) at 68 mph or slower. The non-profit is being supported in the initiative by national safety advocacy organizations, the American Trucking Associations, trucking companies, private citizens and business executives.

Already, speed limiting governors are required to be set well below 68 mph on heavy trucks in the European Union, Japan, Australia and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec, so the U.S. is behind the rest of the world.

“The U.S. needs to catch up with the safety consciousness of the rest of the world,” said Owings. “Instead, we seem to be going nowhere in terms of measures supporting highway truck safety.”

Road Safe America was founded by Steve and Susan Owings after their son, Cullum, was killed in 2002 when his car – stopped in an interstate traffic jam – was crushed from behind by a speeding tractor trailer truck on cruise control.

“We hope that citizens will contact their representatives in Washington and demand that the Transportation Department take positive action on this common sense rule immediately,” Owings commented.

Speed limiting devices have been standard equipment on tractor trucks in the U.S. since the early 1990s, and many companies and independent truckers use them, but there is no national requirement for all trucks to activate their speed governors.

“In addition to improving safety, we will reduce our nation’s fuel consumption and the resulting green house gas emissions by enacting this regulation,” Owings declared.

For more information, please visit www.roadsafeamerica.org.

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