March 6, 2019

The Honorable Trey Hollingsworth
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Cuellar
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Hollingsworth and Representative Cuellar:

The undersigned organizations are pleased to support HR 1374, the DRIVE-Safe Act. This important legislation would help to alleviate the nationwide shortage of commercial drivers by providing younger drivers with the opportunity to enter the industry.

Seventy percent of the nation’s freight is carried by commercial trucks yet as our economy strengthens, motor carriers are having difficulty finding the drivers they need to handle growing capacity. According to a recent estimate, the nation needs an additional 50,000 truck drivers immediately, a shortage that is expected to grow to more than 174,000 by 2026. In many supply chains, companies are being forced to increase prices to account for higher transportation costs. This will ultimately result in higher prices for consumers on everything from electronics to food.

While 48 states currently allow drivers to obtain a commercial driver’s license at 18, they are prohibited from driving in interstate commerce until they are 21. The DRIVE-Safe Act would create a two-step apprenticeship program to allow these younger drivers to enter the industry safely. Candidates would be accompanied in the cab by experienced drivers for a total of 400 hours of on-duty time with at least 240 hours of driving time.

Trucks used in the program would be required to be outfitted with the latest safety technology including active braking collision mitigation systems, forward-facing event recording cameras, speed limiters set at 65 miles per hour or less and automatic or automatic manual transmissions.

The DRIVE-Safe Act will help our nation’s freight continue to move while preserving the safety of our highway system. It will help fill desperately needed jobs and provide younger Americans with the opportunity to enter a profession where they can earn an average of $53,000 with full benefits. We look forward to working with you to enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Apparel and Footwear Association
American Bakers Association
American Beverage Association
American Chemistry Council
American Coatings Association
American Forest and Paper Association
American Foundry Society
American Frozen Food Institute
American Supply Association
American Trucking Associations
Associated Grocers of New England
Associated Equipment Distributors
Textile Care Allied Trade Associations
The Fertilizer Institute
Tire Industry Association
Truck Renting and Leasing Association
Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America
World Millwork Alliance
UPS
U.S. Chamber of Commerce