

Idaho 55 Written Comments

My organization, Walk & Ride Eagle, Inc., represents pedestrians and bicyclists in Eagle, Idaho. We have serious concerns related to this application for a 22.3% increase in permitted large truck weights traveling in Highway 55 between I84 and Highway 44. This section of the route under consideration is regularly used by Eagle residents, on foot and by bicycle, to access city trails, commercial developments and the downtown city core. The evaluation performed by District 3 is wholly inadequate as it pertains to pedestrian and bicyclist safety along the route. In fact, we find no mention of pedestrian or bicyclist safety in this evaluation. We believe that to be a serious omission. The NHTSA found in their 1997 report that vehicle weight matters, both in the case of vehicle crashes and accidents involving pedestrians and bicyclists. The report states: "Continued growth in the number and weight of light trucks, unless offset by safety improvements, is likely to increase the hazard in collisions between the trucks and smaller road users (including bicyclists and pedestrians). A reduction in truck weights is likely to generate significant benefits for pedestrians and car occupants that might exceed the added risk for the occupants of the trucks." While these NHTSA findings were from an investigation into the safety impacts of lighter weight passenger vehicles, simple physics will show that they apply equally (but inversely) to increasing vehicle weight in large trucks as it pertains to impacts with much lighter pedestrians and bicyclists. Therefore, an increase in truck weights is likely to generate significant adverse impacts to pedestrian and bicyclist safety. A study conducted by the engineering firm JUB in 2015 found that pedestrian and bicyclist safety to be a major concern on the road segment under consideration between Chinden and Highway 44. Increasing permitted vehicle weights on this section will further exacerbate these concerns. The City of Eagle has made application for Federal Highway funds to make safety improvements to this section of highway, including adding a pedestrian/bicycle overpass over the north channel of the Boise River and a barrier-enhanced dedicated bicycle lane along this section of the highway. COMPASS has

prioritized funds for these improvements in their 5-year budget plan. While the applicant claims that the number of trips would decrease by “almost one third”, it would actually only decrease them by less than one quarter (23%). This decrease in number of trips would not sufficiently offset the increased risk to pedestrians and bicyclists. We ask that IDT deny this request until pedestrian and bicyclist safety improvements can be made to the section of Highway 55 between Chinden and Highway 44 that will mitigate the additional risks that increasing permitted vehicle weights will impose on pedestrians and bicyclists.

Rick Tholen
Resident

Idaho 55 and Idaho 69 Written Comments

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed 129,000 truck routes on Idaho 55 and Idaho 69. Both of these roadways are already overburdened with heavily loaded double and triple-trailer trucks. Safety for passenger car occupants is my primary concern; the added weight, increased stopping distance and reduced maneuverability gives me great concern on these two accident prone highways and these excessive weight vehicles will further damage our deteriorating roads. Please reject the application(s) for an unnecessary burden on our already overloaded in-town highways.

John P. Haynes
Janice F. Gardam
Residents