



February 28, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Chairman  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

The National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) represents the convenience and fuel retailing industry, which has more than 154,535 stores in the United States and employs approximately 2.7 million workers. These retailers serve about 160 million people per day—around half of the U.S. population. The industry, however, is truly an industry of small businesses. Approximately 63 percent of convenience store owners operate a single store, and approximately 74 percent of our membership is composed of companies that operate ten stores or fewer.

Our industry has been providing convenience services to motorists since Congress created the Interstate Highway System in 1956. Congress, seeing the need to protect local businesses, jobs, and tax bases, prohibited the offering of commercial services at rest areas on the Interstate right-of-way. These tens of thousands of small businesses located near the Interstate generate millions of dollars in tax revenue, and in some cases these businesses serve as the primary contributor of sales and property tax revenue in the community.

As you consider legislation to incentivize investment in America's infrastructure, NACS urges you to oppose efforts to overturn the ban that prohibits commercial services at rest areas. Rest area commercialization results in an unfair competitive environment for privately operated businesses, and will ultimately destroy a successful economic business model the benefits not only businesses in our industry but the towns and localities that depend on the taxes we generate. Allowing state governments to unfairly compete with private businesses for the services of Interstate motorists will risk both jobs and tax revenue as it would certainly close businesses at Interstate exits.

Some states have asserted that commercialization will raise revenue for the state to meet budgetary shortfalls. The commercial activity, however, is not new commercial activity, it is simply redirected activity away from the small businesses that line our highway interchanges to the state-run rest area. Commercialized rest areas would reduce economic activity along the Interstate Highway System, not enhance it.

NACS strongly urges the Committee to oppose efforts to commercialize Interstate rest areas. Doing so will preserve a well-reasoned policy initiative that has benefited thousands of communities across the country and provided valuable services to highway passengers.

Sincerely,

Paige Anderson  
Director, Government Relations  
National Association of Convenience Stores

cc: Members of the Committee on Environment and Public Works