

June 16, 2010

Secretary Raymond LaHood
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration recently allowed hazardous cargo trucks to use Boston as a daytime through route and to travel on Commercial Street in Boston's historic North End/Waterfront neighborhood. The North End/Waterfront Residents' Association, with a membership of over 350 residents in the North End and Waterfront districts, strongly supports the City of Boston's request for a 15-month extension of the City's daytime ban of hazardous cargo trucks cutting through the City and restriction from using Commercial Street, to enable the City to follow the federal process necessary to protect public safety and historical resources.

The Commercial Street route is particularly inappropriate for hazardous cargo. Despite its name, Commercial Street passes through an area of large residential buildings, public parks and recreational facilities, senior housing complexes, a hotel, and many small neighborhood businesses. Along Commercial Street runs the Harborwalk, providing residents and visitors access to the harbor and our historical waterfront. Our children, our elders, and all others cross Commercial Street to reach baseball fields, parks, tennis courts, bocce courts, the community pool and a community skating rink. A portion of the Freedom Trail, a tourist destination with 3 million visitors annually, runs along Commercial Street. Hazardous cargo trucks on Commercial Street pose an unacceptable and serious public-safety hazard to its residents and visitors.

In the long term, we request a complete, permanent ban on hazardous cargo trucks using the North End/Waterfront as a through route. It is regrettable that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has supported the interests of the hazardous cargo carriers over the safety of our residents and the greater public. Recognized as one of the country's oldest, historic neighborhoods, the North End is home to 11,000 residents in a densely populated area of only two-tenths of a square mile. Even a minor incident will have catastrophic consequences to residents, visitors and historic structures. Hazardous cargo trucks not delivering to the North End/Waterfront should be confined to interstate routes outside of the City to avoid serious public safety risk.

Sincerely,

Mark P. Paul, President
North End/Waterfront Neighborhood Association.

Cc:
Mayor Tom Menino
Boston Traffic Commissioner Tom Tinlin
Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Anne Ferro
Representative Aaron Michlewitz
Councilman Salvatore LaMattina
Senator John Kerry
Senator Scott Brown
Congressman Mike Capuano