



Hatchett & Hatchett Trucking Co., Inc.

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June 11, 1998

RE: Docket No. FHWA-98-3706 - 15

FHWA-Attn: Docket Clerk
U.S. Dot Dockets, Room PL-401
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590-0001

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
DOCKET SECTION
98 JUN 16 PM 12: 58

Dear To whom it may concern,

My name is Jerry A. Hatchett. I am the president of Hatchett & Hatchett Trucking Company, Inc. Our company is located in Bassett, VA and operates 10 power units. We have been in business for 16 years. I am writing in response to the proposed rulemaking on "Hours Of Service of Drivers" as it relates to supporting documents.

First, I would like to say that our company is committed to safety. An accident or an out of service order is a big event to us, not just another occurrence that impacts our statistical standing with the DOT. Since these incidents are few, it's hard to justify the expense of a full time safety manager to deal with these isolated situations. In managing a small trucking company I have to wear many hats. When I see that even very large carriers with large and sophisticated safety departments have trouble staying in compliance with the rules, I wonder what chance I have. Running a safe operation and operating in compliance with the law is very important to our company, but the rules need to be simplified and made clearer so that compliance is possible.

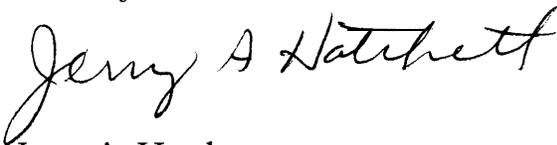
I believe all carriers should endeavor to have programs in place that ensure safe operations and compliance with the rules. As it relates to Hours of Service, however, the rules are very cumbersome and this proposed rulemaking makes this only worse. We need guidance. Show us what you think an ideal program is. Which of the supporting documents would you prefer we use? If we set up our

program in good faith how do we know that the auditor will agree that it is effective? How much time and energy should I focus on the issue if an auditor can come in and apply some obscure document to the logs in an effort to find me at fault with no regard to any effort expended to try to comply?

Personally, I have no problem expending the effort if I have some reasonable expectation that the program we develop will meet regulatory muster. In addition, if such a program is developed with DOT guidance, then auditors should focus on whether or not the program is working the way it should. If the program is not working as well as it should, work with us to make the program work better. The proposed rulemaking indicates that instead of trying to work with carriers to improve compliance, regulators will apply punitive measures by throwing out our program and require us to develop a system that would require the cross referencing of over 30 documents. I would like to comply, but as a small company owner, the smarter business decision may be to pay a fairly large fine rather than spend many times that trying to comply.

I agree that every motor carrier should have some kind of program in place to ensure compliance with the hours of service regulations. This proposed rulemaking however fails. Simplify the proposed rule and let us know what we can expect at audit time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry A. Hatchett". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Jerry A. Hatchett
President