

INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

January 12, 2004

The Honorable Annette M. Sandberg
Administrator
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

**Exemption to Allow Werner Enterprises, Inc., to Use Global Positioning
System Technology to Monitor and Record Drivers' Hours of Service
Docket No. FMCSA-2003-15818**

Dear Ms. Sandberg:

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) is a nonprofit organization that identifies ways to reduce deaths, injuries, and property damage from motor vehicle crashes. We support granting a two-year exemption to Werner Enterprises, Inc., to allow the continued use of global positioning system (GPS) technology to document and monitor drivers' hours of service, as begun in 1998 under a pilot demonstration project. GPS technology is a promising and cost-effective method of improving drivers' compliance with hours of service. However, we urge the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to publish a systematic summary of the results of the pilot program with Werner. This should include a summary of the benefits and costs of the technology.

Numerous studies have documented the widespread noncompliance with hours-of-service rules (Beilock, 1995; Braver et al., 1992; Hertz, 1991; McCartt et al., 2000). Electronic on-board recorders, GPS, and other technologies provide cost-effective means to correct the deficiencies of the current paper-based enforcement system. IIHS repeatedly has petitioned the U.S. Department of Transportation to require on-board recorders in long-distance commercial motor vehicles to increase compliance with hours-of-service rules (IIHS, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1995). We have provided evidence that these devices are technically and economically feasible (IIHS, 2000, 2002). GPS represents an alternative technology also capable of collecting much more accurate information on drivers' schedules, particularly their hours behind the wheel.

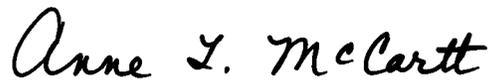
FMCSA has not published a formal systematic assessment of the GPS pilot program, even though such a report would be of great interest to the trucking industry, technology vendors, and enforcement and safety

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communities. It would be useful to ascertain the effects of Werner's GPS monitoring system on carrier operations and on enforcement, as well as the system's accuracy in recording driving and off-duty time. In the notice of intent to extend the exemption, FMCSA refers to system modifications, reflected in the revised Memorandum of Understanding, that resulted from the agency's monitoring of Werner's use of GPS. A formal report on the pilot program should discuss such lessons learned so others may benefit.

Many carriers with electronic recorders and GPS technology do not use these systems to document compliance with hours of service (Campbell and Lang, 1998; Wright and Fogel, 2002), and Werner was the only motor carrier to participate in the GPS pilot program. Thus, it is apparent that many in the trucking industry are reluctant to experiment with the use of on-board technology to supervise drivers' schedules on a widespread basis. This may be in part because motor carriers that currently do not comply with hours-of-service rules have little interest in using technology that would document these practices. There also may be a lack of understanding of how easily the technology may be used. In any event, FMCSA has a duty to conduct the needed research and development and to promulgate performance standards so that an effective system of enforcement -- based on tamper-resistant on-board technology rather than paper logbooks -- can be implemented. The timely publication of an objective, systematic assessment of the GPS pilot program would be an important step.

Sincerely,



Anne T. McCartt, Ph.D.
Senior Research Associate

cc: Docket Management System, Docket No. FMCSA-2003-15818

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