

American Trucking Associations President and CEO Chris Spear
2023 State of the Industry Address
Monday, October 16, 2023 Austin, Texas
(Selected Excerpts, As Prepared for Delivery)

Last month, the American Trucking Associations reached its 90th year. For nine decades, the ATA and its federation of 50 state trucking associations has been the leading voice for our industry in Washington, DC and every state capitol throughout the country. That's volume, reach and history no other voice in trucking can claim, and few industry associations can match. Today, we can proudly declare our efforts are making a difference.

We come to Austin to sharpen our ability to navigate the future of trucking. Your firsthand experiences help shape our story. This very real, data-backed narrative was shared during six Congressional hearings this year, allowing ATA to steer the legislative process toward your tier 1 priorities. This steady cadence of truth and common sense is what you expect of your association. It cuts directly through the rhetoric and emotion peddled by our foes: trial lawyers chasing jackpot justice, self-promoting union bosses and delusional environmental extremists. Together, they constitute a clear threat to our industry's ability to grow and support our nation's economic security.

Our war with the plaintiff's bar carries on, and we're winning... with major victories this year in Florida and Iowa. Elected officials at all levels of government are listening, many are now acting, thanks to you. That's leadership. Your story is now being told at the highest volume and heard in hearing rooms, courtrooms and state houses throughout the country. There have now been over a dozen reform bills passed since ATA declared lawsuit abuse a tier one priority in 2019, and there are now a dozen more states lining up to do the same.

We fight to win. We are committed to helping our state association partners shape legislation, strategies and outcomes. We're helping fund awareness, so state lawmakers understand what's at stake and do the right thing. If you belong to a state association and want to put trial lawyers on their heels, speak up. Help make lawsuit abuse a priority in your state capital. Lend your support and testimony. Jackpot justice has no place in the courtroom and no place in our industry.

ATA's support of our state trucking partners is not limited to just one issue. Today we stand alongside the California Trucking Association as they file suit against the California Air Resources Board... an unelected, ill-informed band of extremists who have no clue the impact their timelines and targets will have on our economy.

At ATA, we start with yes. If the goal is to reduce emissions, eliminate the century-old federal excise tax, which adds 12.5% to the price of every new tractor purchased today. That's roughly \$25,000 per power unit. Those same new trucks produce 98.5 percent less emissions than half of all trucks currently operating in California.

In fact, 53 percent of trucks operating today in California are equipped with 2010 model engines or older. Replacing them with today's new equipment would reduce emissions in the state by 83 percent. We can cut emissions, starting right now. This would save lives by putting the safest equipment on our roadways. And it would support jobs... union jobs, which I understand is a major priority to the most "pro-union president in American history." Truth is, there's something in this for everyone. And most important of all, our solution is achievable – no rainbows, no unicorns needed.

These are today's stakes, which underscores why advocacy matters. Without a seat at the table, our industry... our way of life... could look entirely different over the next decade. Which is why we must evolve and adapt more quickly than any threat that comes our way.

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