

## PERCEPTIONS OF FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

### Problem

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is interested in developing a campaign to educate the public on the positive public benefits of efficient freight movement. Before doing that however, MDOT first needs to understand what the general public perception is about freight movement and its importance to the state. Once the perception is better understood, MDOT can more easily develop an awareness and education campaign about the merits of freight transportation.

### Objective

The objective of this project was to survey what Maryland drivers know about the movement of freight by truck and rail in Maryland by specifically addressing the following areas:

- General attitude toward truck and rail modes of freight transportation;
- Perceptions of benefits of truck and rail transportation;
- Perceptions of threats posed by truck and rail transportation;
- Knowledge of the regulatory framework governing truck and rail transportation; and
- Knowledge of and perception of economic benefits of truck and rail transportation.

### Description

The Schaefer Center at the University of Baltimore completed 808 surveys using a sample of landline telephones and cell phones from February 26 through August 19, 2014. The survey has a +/- 3.45% margin of sampling error at a 95% confidence level. This means that it can be expected that if this survey were repeated 100 times on an independent, randomly selected sample of the same population, one would expect to find the same estimates of opinion, within a range of +/- 3.45 percentage points, 95 times. The overall number of respondents are adequate for statewide inferences of the survey results.

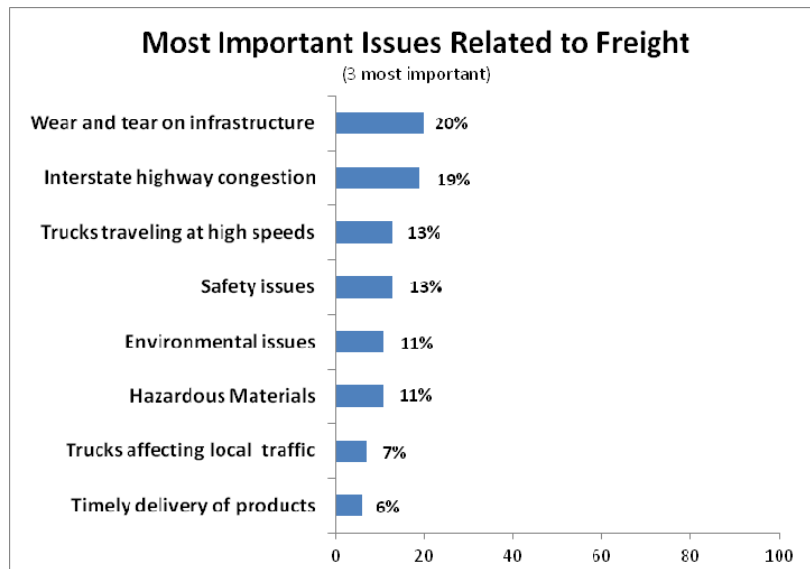
Respondents were asked a series of screening questions to ensure that they were at least 18 years of age and currently held a Maryland driver's license. Drivers with a commercial driver's license who drove trucks commonly referred to as "18-wheelers," were screened out of the sample.

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**Results**

The survey resulted in a number of interesting findings. Among them was the fact that 14% of those surveyed were aware of the Maryland Statewide Freight Plan. While MDOT would like to further promote the plan, the original expectation was that public awareness would be lower. Several other findings are highlighted below:

- When asked what mode of transportation comes to mind when thinking about freight movement, 63% said trucking (i.e. highways) and 30% said rail.
- When asked how important they thought it was to ensure an efficient freight transportation system, 96% of respondents said it was very important or important.
- When asked which areas of the state were primarily affected by freight movement in Maryland, 72% said that it affects the entire state equally.
- When asked about the biggest safety concern, 48% state it was truck driver fatigue and 30% said it was trucks driving at high speeds.
- When asked to select one mode of transportation to make a top investment priority, 63% said highways and 26% said rail.
- When asked about the most important issues related to freight, the responses were more evenly distributed as noted in the figure below.



**Report Information**

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**Link to Final Report**

[http://www.roads.maryland.gov/OPR\\_Research/MD-14-SHA-UB-3-2\\_Perceptions-of-Freight-Transportation\\_Report.pdf](http://www.roads.maryland.gov/OPR_Research/MD-14-SHA-UB-3-2_Perceptions-of-Freight-Transportation_Report.pdf)