

Sue Lawless, Executive Director & Chief Safety Office
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: ATA Response to Docket No. FMCSA-2024-031: Information Collection on the National Consumer Complaint Database

Dear Executive Director Lawless,

On behalf of the American Trucking Associations (ATA)¹ and ATA's Moving and Storage Conference (MSC),² we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) information collection request regarding its plans to modernize and expand upon the National Consumer Complaint Database (NCCDB).³ These changes are based, in part, on recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in September 2023.⁴ ATA and MSC continue to support the NCCDB and its mission to provide a centralized platform for consumers and businesses to report concerns related to the motor carrier industry. A well-functioning complaint reporting system is vital to maintaining trust and accountability within the industry as well as identifying and stopping bad actors who pose safety and security threats to the broader public.

In addition to supporting FMCSA's adoption of the recommendations made by GAO to make the NCCB more user-friendly, accessible, modern, and transparent, ATA places special emphasis on GAO's recommendation that FMCSA develop enhanced outreach to the public and users to bolster "public expectations and transparency." As we have stated in past comments regarding the database, ATA encourages FMCSA to deploy education and promotion for the NCCDB to improve awareness and utilization of the system. ATA reiterates that FMCSA should build out and improve its communication and marketing efforts on NCCDB to ensure that consumers, businesses, and industry stakeholders understand its purpose and the complaints it is designed to handle. Many consumers remain unaware of their rights or the proper channels for reporting fraudulent or unethical practices, while some in and around the industry do not know it exists. Moreover, the name "National Consumer Complaint Database" does not explicitly indicate its relevance to trucking and moving-related concerns, thus necessitating better public communications, marketing, and/or rebranding for enhanced clarity.

¹ ATA is a united federation of motor carriers, state trucking associations, and national trucking conferences created to promote and protect the interests of the trucking industry. Directly and through its affiliated organizations, ATA represents more than 30,000 motor carriers in the United States, Canada, and Mexico encompassing every type and class of motor carrier operation.

² ATA's Moving and Storage Conference is the leading national organization representing household good moving companies and industry suppliers, as well as various state moving and storage associations.

³ 90 FR 382.

⁴ "Motor Carrier Operations: Improvements Needed to Federal System for Collecting and Addressing Complaints against Truck, Moving, and Bus Companies," Government Accountability Office, September 2023.

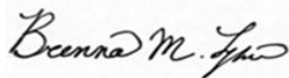
Additionally, ATA recommends that FMCSA use the NCCDB to actively identify, address, and respond to user complaints – a suggestion ATA previously raised in its March 2022 comments regarding the NCCDB.⁵ A reporting system is only as strong as its ability to respond and drive corrective action, and timely responses from FMCSA will bolster public confidence in the NCCDB. To do so, FMCSA must ensure that the NCCDB is adequately staffed and resourced to adequately handle and respond to complaints. We also recommend leveraging existing efforts and capacity within FMCSA’s registration fraud prevention team, given that carriers and the public are often directed to NCCDB to report registration and MC/USDOT number fraud. A well-supported database will ensure timely responses, prevent backlog issues, and maintain the credibility necessary for its utilization and success.

As mentioned, ATA and MSC support GAO’s 2023 recommendations for improving the NCCDB which include enhancing its functionality to address evolving challenges in the trucking and moving and storage industries, including by leveraging data analytics to predict and identify patterns of fraudulent behavior. Enhancements to the system should include:

- Identifying recurring names, aliases, and addresses linked to fraudulent activities, such as hostage load complaints, identity fraud or spoofing, and bait-and-switch schemes.
- Analyzing geographic hotspots to pinpoint areas with high concentrations of fraudulent activity, aiding enforcement efforts.
- Expanding data sharing with federal and state agencies, law enforcement, and industry partners to create a unified front against fraud and theft in the trucking and moving industries.
- Using insights from complaint trends to develop targeted educational campaigns for consumers and businesses.

ATA and MSC appreciate FMCSA’s efforts to enhance the NCCDB and support the agency’s commitment to consumer protection and industry integrity. We urge FMCSA to implement these recommendations to strengthen the database’s impact, improve public awareness, and ensure that complaints lead to meaningful resolutions. We look forward to ongoing collaboration on this important initiative and welcome any questions that may arise.

Sincerely,



Brenna Lyles
Senior Director, Safety Policy
American Trucking Associations (ATA)



Dan Hilton
Executive Director
ATA Moving and Storage Conference

⁵ Docket No. FMCSA-2021-0089: Agency Information Collection Activities; Renewal Information Collection Request: National Consumer Complaint Database.