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White House to Meet with Groups About Truck Buying Incentive

A coalition of trucking groups pushing for a tax break for truckers to buy new trucks are tentatively scheduled to meet with staff members at the White House this week.

The Obama administration issued the invitation after the American Truck Dealers, the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association, the Engine Manufacturers Association, National Truck Equipment Association and others sent a letter to the president calling for a short-term investment tax credit of 10 percent on the purchase of new Class 8 trucks equipped with the cleaner-burning EPA 2010-mandate engines. The letter also asked for a "green voucher" incentive for Class 6 and 7 trucks powered by the 2010 engines.

"Simply put," the letter said, "until the economy begins to demonstrate signs of continued growth and stability, trucking companies will not commit to purchase any of these more expensive trucks. As a result, manufacturers and dealers will not expand or hire new employees and if sales do not improve may lead to additional layoffs."

In 2009, the sales and manufacturing of commercial vehicles reached historically low levels, down from about 544,000 in 2006 to 199,000 in 2009, the letter noted, saying this slowdown in demand has forced many assembly plants, suppliers and commercial truck dealers to lay off thousands of workers.