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Sent: Thursday, June 20, 2002 5:38 PM

Subject: Highway Transport Cmte. speech

Darrin Roth speech from the Annapolis meeting:

- 33-point plan
- Agree or no position on 90% of AASHTO reauth. Positions
- Disagree on how we get there, not where to go
- AASHTO – full flexibility
- 91% minimum allocation, going to 95%
- Question whether fed highway program should continue
- NHS, like IS is a system, and like IS, benefits of making improvements extend beyond purview of state/local govt. agency making decisions.
- Benefits of network effects not counted.
- At a minimum fed govt. should have role in identifying bottlenecks to moving freight, if not a role in determining how fed money is invested
- Host of other proposals, but want to spend some time talking about TSW because it will be a very important issue during reauthorization

- We just heard a presentation from Joe Morris about the new TRB study and I think it's a great study with some very innovative ideas that the trucking industry is likely to support.

- But it also repeated what just about every other size and weight study has said for probably the last 50 years:
 - ◆ Given the right truck driven by the right driver on the right highway and under the right conditions, size and weight limits can be increased, and tremendous benefits can be realized.
 - ◆ Unfortunately, Congress and others have generally shied away from seriously dealing with the issue and as a result some very poor decisions have been made.
 - ◆ This is an unsustainable trend and hopefully in this reauthorization cycle we can begin to formulate some sensible regulations, because the impact of truck travel on our society is large and growing.

- Trucks are the dominant mover of America's freight

- ◆ 67% volume
- ◆ 87% revenue
- ◆ Truck market share and volume of freight will continue to grow
- ◆ That means more trucks on the road
 - Nearly 2 million more trucks on the road by 2013
 - 55 billion VMT increase

- ◆ This will produce more congestion, more pollution, higher freight costs and most importantly more accidents
- ◆ Truck accident rates are coming down slowly.
 - The rate today is 2.2 fatal accidents per 100 million miles traveled, which by the way is half what it was 20 years ago, before we went to 80,000 pounds nationwide
 - Assuming that by 2013 the rate is 2 fatals per 100 million miles, by that date there will be 1,100 more fatal accidents involving trucks than we have today, nearly a 20 percent increase.
 - We can also expect at least 100,000 more injury and property damage accidents per year than we have today.
 - Much of the low-hanging fruit that brought accident rates down has been picked:
 - We can't do anything to avoid 70% of car-truck accidents because trucks don't contribute
- ◆ Only way to avoid increases in number of accidents is to reduce trucks' accident exposure, and that means increasing trucking productivity through higher size and weight limits.
- ◆ We know from previous experience over many decades that more productive trucks can be as safe or safer than the trucks they replace.
 - Some will argue that there isn't enough accident data to prove that conclusively so we shouldn't do anything.
 - I would argue that there is enough to at least be comfortable with the very cautious approach that the TRB study has suggested.
 - A study commissioned by FHWA a few years ago found that LCVs have an accident rate that's half that of single-trailer trucks and STAA doubles.
 - Similarly, looking at accident rates from the U. of Michigan and VMT data from the FHWA Cost Allocation study, one can come up with a fatal accident rate for triples that is half that of STAA doubles.

- One of our triples carrier members, Conway Western Express, calculated that their triples accident rate is seven times lower than the rate for other trucks in their fleet.
 - One of the most comprehensive studies of LCVs' safety experience, which was done by the Alberta DOT, found that replacing tractor-semitrailers with LCVs in that province would produce a 90% reduction in tractor-semitrailer accidents.
 - During reauthorization ATA will support a pilot program that will allow two or more states to make their size and weight regulations uniform.
 - As many of you know, western LCV states have very disparate regulations and this has caused severe inefficiencies, especially in states where due to rail abandonments, trucks have become the dominant mover of agricultural products.
 - Before the LCV freeze, western states, under the auspices of WASHTO, were working together to try to come up with more uniform LCV regulations.
 - This makes imminent sense and they should be able to continue this work.
- ◆ ATA is also supporting a proposal to give autohaulers a 10% weight tolerance.
 - This is needed because of the much higher volumes of heavier SUVs, light trucks and minivans that they are being asked to haul and trucks are weighing out before cubing out.
 - ◆ Supporting the ASET coalition's efforts to pass legislation giving states the authority to allow 97,000 pound, six-axle trucks.
- ATA is not interested in federal mandates and we don't want unlimited operation of LCVs or any other more productive trucks.
 - We believe that states are in a better position to determine the appropriate size and weight limits for their highways than the federal government is.
 - Strict federal control of size and weight has produced regulations that the TRB study describes as fossils, relics of an earlier era and completely out of step with today's economy and with the advances in vehicle technology and new infrastructure design and construction techniques that were not available 30 years ago, when the current federal limits were established.

- I hope that this committee will lead the way within AASHTO to put AASHTO on record supporting state flexibility on size and weight.
- That doesn't mean you as a state or AASHTO as an organization supports size and weight increases.
- The one thing I have heard over and over again from AASHTO is that states need more flexibility to address their own transportation needs, without interference from Washington.
- Why should size and weight be any different?
- This is a position that's fully consistent with AASHTO policy and fully consistent with the approach that AASHTO is taking with regard to the federal-state role in setting transportation policy.
- I believe you will be asked to support a resolution later today in support of pilot programs, and I encourage you to endorse that resolution in recognition of the fact that some states would like the flexibility to make some changes to their regulations.