

Subcommittee on Highway Transport (SCOHT)
Annual Meeting
Annapolis Maryland
June 9-11, 2002

Administrative Report
Parker F. Williams
SCOHT Chairman

Summary of legislation, meetings, AASHTO resolutions and other activities impacting SCOHT since the 2001 Annual Meeting in Nashville Tennessee

Summary of CDL Survey responses from SCOHT Members

- On September 4, 2001 we canvassed all 50 SCOHT members to determine State responses to the NPRM appearing in the federal register on July 27, 2001 regarding proposed changes to the CDL program to enhance safety.
- We determined that 10 states had responded – California, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.
- Four states (Texas, Kentucky, Maine and Massachusetts) were either already in compliance or needed to implement minor changes to be in compliance.
- Five states (Maryland, Nevada, Rhode Island, Washington and Wisconsin) expected to have a difficult time complying with the 10 day reporting requirements after conviction.
- California needed additional information.
- It was agreed that the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators is the appropriate organization to take the lead on behalf of the states.

Summary of HR 3132 – Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act

- New legislation to extend the existing limits on truck size and weight that apply only to the 44,000-mile interstate system to include the entire 156,000-mile National Highway System (NHS).

- Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) and 43 other co-sponsors including Rep. Jim Oberstar (D-MN), the ranking democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee sponsored the legislation.
- HR 3132 will freeze trailer lengths at 53 feet. Eleven states currently permit trailers longer than 53 feet and will extend the current freeze on longer combination vehicles (LCV's) to the NHS.
- HR 3132 will also extend the federal 80,000 pound gross weight limit to the entire NHS.
- In addition, HR 3132 will close the “non-divisible” loophole that some states have used to provide exemptions for certain commodities.
- A grandfather provision allows exemptions for states that have enacted laws on or before August 1, 2001.

Summary of Standing Committee on Highways Reorganization

- At the April 2002 AASHTO mid-year meeting in Pennsylvania, the Board of Directors approved a reorganization of the Standing Committee on Highways our parent standing committee.
- The reorganization was recommended by a task force appointed by SCOH Chairman, Joe Perkins, CEO of the Alaska DOT.
- SCOH has reviewed its existing structure to identify overlaps and conflicts among its subcommittees and task forces. Crosscutting issues have been identified and new issues and topics that SCOH should deal with have been assigned under the new structure. The organization has been modified to better fit current emphasis areas such as operations, maintenance and program delivery.
- SCOH will create a Council on Project Delivery and a Council on Operations for the purpose of providing guidance and direction to the subcommittees and task forces on technical issues, reviewing subcommittee and task force work plans and identifying key policy areas for the Standing Committee on Highways.
- The councils will be comprised of the chairs of the assigned subcommittees and task forces with other members as recommended by SCOH. Chairs may designate their vice-chairs or another designee to attend council meetings as necessary.
- Additional organization changes have been made to eliminate redundant or inactive task forces, combine existing SCOH subcommittees, or reassign certain task forces from one subcommittee to another.

- The Subcommittee on Highway Transport has been assigned to the Council on Operations together with the new Systems Operations and Maintenance Subcommittee, the Maintenance Subcommittee and the Traffic Engineering Subcommittee.
- The Council on Project Delivery includes the Construction Subcommittee, Design Subcommittee, Bridges and Structures Subcommittee, Materials Subcommittee and the Right of Way and Utilities Subcommittee.
- A new SCOH organization chart is available that outlines the changes.
- Other changes have been made to consolidate task force and subcommittee meetings and to encourage the use of video conferencing and teleconferencing technology to reduce travel demands.
- All task forces and subcommittees will be required to submit annual work plans including a list of major issues to their respective Council chairs for review and comment and to the full SCOH Committee for approval 60 days prior to the AASHTO Annual Meeting.
- The SCOH work plan is due August 10, 2002, 60 days prior to this year's October 10, 2002 AASHTO Annual Meeting in Anchorage Alaska.

Summary of FHWA/ENO Foundation sponsored roundtable on "The Importance of Freight Transportation to the Nation's Economy"

- On February 5, 2002, the FHWA and ENO Foundation convened a roundtable titled "The Importance of Freight to the Nation's Economy."
- The discussion centered on two papers commissioned by FHWA, "Transportation Infrastructure, Freight Services Sector and Economic Growth," by T.R. Lakshmanan and William P. Anderson of the Center for Transportation Studies at Boston University, and "Economic Benefits of Transportation: The Freight Story," prepared by a team from ICF Consulting and HLB Decision-Economics.
- The reports develop a broader and complex picture of the impact of transportation on the nation's economy, describing how changes in transportation efficiency produce changes in the structure of the economy resulting in benefits going far beyond the savings in transportation costs.
- The ICF/HLB paper is one of a series of reports produced for FHWA's Office of Freight Management and may be found at www.ops.fhwa.gov/freight. This work is directed toward developing better techniques for applying benefit/cost analysis to freight transportation projects.

- The FHWA is developing a “Freight Story” document that details freight transportation issues, trends, policy options and the implications of infrastructure investment strategies for the future.

Summary of Special Committee on Intermodal Transportation & Economic Expansion Meeting held at the AASHTO April 2002 mid-year meeting in Pennsylvania

- The mission of this new committee is focused on intermodal freight transportation issues and on the relationship between transportation and the economy. The Committee will formulate and carry out a strategy to develop and support the case for the economic value of transportation, arrange dialogues with the business community and foster an exchange of information concerning transportation and economic development among AASHTO member departments.
- The Committee is chaired by Thomas Norton, CEO of the Colorado DOT. The Vice-Chair is David Galt, CEO of the Montana DOT. Members are drawn from the chairs of a number of other AASHTO committees including the Subcommittee on Highway Transport.
- Most of the meeting was devoted to a review of TEA –21 Reauthorization policy resolutions for freight transportation to be presented to the AASHTO Board of Directors for action later at the mid-year meeting.
- The committee considered the following reauthorization proposals:
 - Dedicated funding to allow US DOT and the states to implement a training program to strengthen the ability of state and local transportation agencies to effectively address freight transportation issues.
 - Funding should be made available to state DOT’s and MPO’s on a discretionary basis for enhanced freight transportation planning.
 - Increased funding should be made available for NHS, STP, and CMAQ for states and MPO’s to target increased investments in intermodal connectors.
 - The borders (Section 1018) and corridors (Section 1019) programs should be administered separately as originally legislated.
 - A freight transportation research program should be created under NCHRP that incorporates substantial private sector involvement.
 - Expand CMAQ funding and clarify the eligibility of freight transportation projects that meet CMAQ eligibility guidelines.

- A national freight advisory group should be created as a means of communicating with the US DOT and should include state DOT's.
 - Support the American Association of Railroads (AAR) proposal to create tax credits for investment in qualified rail and intermodal infrastructure.
 - Increase funding for rail grade crossing improvements (Section 130) proportionate to the overall recommended increase in the highway program.
 - Expand and reform the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program (RRIF) such that short line railroads can benefit from the loan and loan guarantee programs.
- The Committee also reviewed the AAR and ATA reauthorization proposals.
 - Lance Grezenback of Cambridge Systematics, Inc made a presentation on the “Economic Benefits of Freight Transportation.”

Summary of TEA-21 Reauthorization Policy positions adopted by the AASHTO Board of Directors

- The AASHTO Board of Directors adopted a series of policy positions on eleven topics at the April 2002 mid-year meeting in Pennsylvania.
- The eleven topics are:
 1. Planning and Conformity
 2. Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining
 3. Interjurisdictional/Intergovernmental
 4. Surface Transportation
 5. Research
 6. Operations/ITS
 7. Safety
 8. Security
 9. Freight
 10. Transit
 11. Finance
- Each topic includes a series of recommended actions each with a statement on background and recommendations for legislation. Each recommendation is categorized into “stay the course”, “course adjustment”, or “new direction.” And within each category further characterized by either “should do” or “must do.”

- AASHTO Executive Director John Horsley will be presenting “Prospects for TEA-21 Reauthorization” later this morning and will provide further details on the policies adopted by the Board of Directors.

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