

**AASHTO Subcommittee on Highway Transport
ANNUAL MEETING
JUNE 9-10, 2003
Holiday Inn, Riverwalk
San Antonio, Texas**

MINUTES

**Patricia McDonald, Chair
Secretary
Vermont Department of Transportation**

**Lawrance Smith, Vice-Chair
Director, Motor Carrier
Texas Department of Transportation**

Monday, June 9

8:00 a.m. **General Session**

Chairperson Pat McDonald called the 2003 annual meeting of AASHTO's Subcommittee on Highway Transport (SCOHT) to order at 8:00 on June 9. Ms. McDonald indicated how pleased she was to chair the subcommittee at a time when the opportunities and challenges facing freight transportation have never been more important. She emphasized that agencies at all levels of government must work together to meet the increasing demands for freight transportation. While the SCOHT focuses on highway transport, public and private sectors must pursue a multimodal approach that takes advantage of the efficiencies of the various modes to freight transportation. Within AASHTO, the various committees involved with freight transportation must coordinate to take advantage of the different perspectives brought by members of each.

Leo Penne, the AASHTO staff liaison to the Committee, thanked Lawrance Smith and others in the Texas Department of Transportation for their efforts in organizing the meeting. He noted that more than 25 States were represented at the meeting. In reviewing the meeting agenda, Mr. Penne noted a desire to strengthen ties with Transportation Research Board Committees responsible for different aspects of freight transportation.

Ms. McDonald noted that States may be organized quite differently to address freight issues. In Vermont there is an Operations Council that has responsibility for many aspects of freight transportation. Trucking is a top priority in Vermont and is particularly important to economic development within the State.

8:30 a.m. **The View from Washington**

Warren E. Hoemann, Acting Deputy Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), noted the importance that the U.S. Department of Transportation places on safety. While truck safety has been improving in recent years, there are still about 5,000 fatalities in truck-involved crashes. At the 2003 National Highway Safety Forum in Lexington, KY, AASHTO adopted the U.S. Department of Transportation goal of reducing the truck fatality rate from 1.65 fatal crashes per 100 million miles of travel to 1 fatal crash per 100 million miles of travel. This will be a challenge for trucking because of the high growth rate in truck transportation forecast over the next 20 years, but a challenge that must be met.

Mr. Hoemann noted that FMCSA has four priorities:

1. To improve the data available to everyone involved in trying to improve trucking safety. Improved data is FMCSA's number one goal and the agency will put resources where they will be the most effective. Mr. Hoemann noted that only 70% of crashes are reported, that data on those crashes often is of poor quality, and that it often takes too long to get data tabulated and into the hands of those seeking ways to reduce truck crash rates. A priority is to get more money to States for safety data collection.
2. To strengthen enforcement of the many regulations in place to promote trucking safety. Again enforcement resources will be targeted to the highest priority areas. Among those is the new entrant program. A recent study by the U.S. DOT's Volpe Center has highlighted a number of safety issues related to new entrants. Education, safety audits, and potentially pulling the authority of companies with poor safety performance are all effective in improving the safety of new entrants. Another priority is the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP). SAFETEA proposes substantial increases in that program and would broaden eligible items that may be funded under the MCSAP program. Mr. Hoemann noted the problem of carriers with safety problems going out of business and opening under different names. Tracking motor carrier executives is one way to eliminate this serious safety problem.
3. To increase FMCSA's responsiveness to all of its various customers. This will include improved communications and getting important regulations such as hours-of-service and new household goods regulations out more quickly.
4. To get legislative changes included in the Administration's SAFETEA proposal enacted. Under SAFETEA funding for safety-related priorities doubles. In addition to increases in the MCSAP program, SAFETEA seeks authority for Federal motor carrier safety inspectors to stop trucks and authority for safety inspectors to review intra-State operations and shut down intra-State carriers found to have serious safety problems. Mr. Hoemann noted that effective partnerships are essential to achieving our joint safety goals.

When asked about why the Administration was not proposing to combine the CVISN and PRISM programs, Mr. Hoemann indicated that in the long run the two programs should be combined, but that in the short run there was a concern that combining the programs would reduce the focus on CVISN level 1 deployment.

Michael Lamm, on detail from FMCSA to the staff of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure presented a congressional outlook on motor carrier legislation. He indicated that the Committee believes the funding level in the Administration's SAFETEA proposal is too low. The House is looking at a 6-year, \$375 billion bill comprised of \$300 billion for highway programs, \$67 billion for transit, and \$8 billion for NHTSA and FMCSA programs. Improving freight movement is a priority, but there is unlikely to be any relaxation of the longer combination vehicle freeze enacted in ISTEA. The Committee is still looking at recommendations contained in the TRB's Special Report 267 on truck size and weight policy. There is some sympathy within the Committee for special exemptions to meet unique needs in individual States. Majority members of the Committee generally do not support the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act that has been introduced. Chairman Young continues to favor exclusive truck lanes, but there are questions concerning how such lanes would be funded; one possibility would be tolls, but the trucking industry generally does not support tolls.

Peter Kyriacopoulos, Assistant Director of Government Relations for AASHTO, discussed prospects for TEA-21 reauthorization from the State DOT perspective. He noted that both AASHTO's Bottom Line report and the U.S. DOT's Condition and Performance report identify funding requirements that exceed funding in the Administration's SAFETEA proposal. AASHTO supports a minimum 6-year funding level of \$300 billion and would likely support the \$375 billion funding level being discussed by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Mr. Kyriacopoulos noted that AASHTO's Transportation Finance Corporation would help overcome the large decrease in the purchasing power of the highway dollar projected by 2009.

Elaine King of the Transportation Research Board discussed TRB freight-related research and committee activities. She handed out a list of TRB publications on trucking and indicated that the electronic version she had provided Leo Penne contained hyperlinks to many of these publications.

Mark Berndt of Wilbur Smith Associates gave a presentation on options for separating truck and car traffic based on a study of freight transportation options in the I-10 corridor that Wilbur Smith had conducted. A copy of Mr. Berndt's PowerPoint presentation is included in the meeting proceedings. He also discussed other work related to truck lanes including work by Daimler-Chrysler on truck platooning, work by the University of California, Berkeley in conjunction with its PATH project, Virginia Polytechnic Institute's Smart Road project, and the University of South Florida's truck lane study. These studies are looking at a variety of design parameters for truck lanes, but have all identified institutional issues that remain to be resolved before truck lanes can be implemented.

Ron Hasty, Director of the Center for Logistics Education and Research at North Texas University gave a presentation on "Solving the Supply Chain Puzzle." A copy of his PowerPoint presentation is included in the proceedings. Among the things Dr. Hasty discussed were the global supply chain, the importance of transportation costs in the total logistics costs for certain firms, the increasing importance of value added services in the logistics system, and the fact that transportation system reliability often is more important than speed.

Kevin Johnson, Branch Chief for Highway Cargo Security in the Transportation Security Administration, gave a presentation entitled "Securing the Freight Transportation System," A copy of his PowerPoint presentation is included in the meeting proceedings. Mr. Johnson discussed the USA Patriot Act, the TSA's interim rule on commercial drivers licenses for hazmat carriers, coordination on CDL rules with Canada and Mexico, the growing problem of cargo theft, and the fact that a large portion of freight classified as "air freight" actually never goes by air.

Dave Decarme in the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of International Programs discussed several international issues affecting freight transportation. He noted that transport is one key to realizing the benefits of NAFTA. Canada is concerned about mutual recognition of regulations. In many areas there is excellent collaboration with the U.S., but in others there is more work to be done. Mexico is concerned about differential treatment that may violate the NAFTA agreement. Three areas are particularly important to the U.S. DOT: security, safety, and efficiency. Globalization has changed the nature of transport. In general discussions about international issues facing the States, the following points were made:

1. In Texas, the emphasis is on safety. Seventy percent of Mexican traffic entering the U.S. comes through Texas.

2. Vermont is concerned about security and closer coordination is needed in planning infrastructure improvements. Canadian routes leading into Vermont are being widened but where will the traffic go once it gets to Vermont? There also are air quality concerns associated with queuing at the border.
3. Michigan indicated it had similar experiences to Vermont.
4. Maine is constructing its first new border crossing in 50 years and is coordinating closely with New Brunswick on this crossing.
5. Washington is concerned about tracking containers and is trying to coordinate efforts through CVISN.

In wrapping up the first day, Ms. McDonald indicated she wants to be sure the Subcommittee is meeting State needs. She said Leo Penne was putting together a survey to assess State interests and needs. A survey was developed in which States were asked to list their highest priority issues, to suggest changes in meeting formats that might make annual meetings more effective, and to identify their most important reauthorization issues. Leo Penne said the SCOHT functions more like a full committee than a subcommittee. AASHTO reorganization had only minor impacts on the SCOHT. A quandary for the committee is getting the right balance between technical and policy issues. The subcommittee has always had a strong technical component that should not be lost but there also are important policy issues related to trucking that are not being adequately addressed. In discussing research, it was emphasized that research proposals have always been more successful when co-sponsored by both SCOHT and State DOTs.

The second morning was devoted to task force meetings. Discussions at the task force meetings are summarized below.

National Oversize/Overweight Uniform Permit Task Force

Jeff Honefanger, chair of the National Oversize/Overweight Uniform Permit Task Force, noted that a truly uniform national permit was unlikely, but that progress is being made at the regional level in developing more uniform permitting practices. This task force also discussed the TRB study and its implications. Bob Franz of the Military Transportation Management Command discussed results of a bridge analysis of the HETS vehicle and other issues related to moves of military equipment. There was a consensus that good coordination and communication between military and State officials on military moves is essential. Jim March of FHWA gave a brief description of a U.S. DOT research project to investigate what a federally-supervised, State-administered permit system for regulating vehicle weights and dimensions such as was recommended by TRB might look like. A copy of Mr. March's PowerPoint presentation is included with the meeting proceedings. There was a lengthy discussion of issues surrounding escort certification including the extent to which State regulations differ and issues surrounding reciprocity among States for escort certification. While rules do differ substantially in some States there is a basis for reciprocity and many States do have reciprocity agreements.

CVO and Technology Task Force

This task force deals with enforcement and regulations not related to Oversize/Overweight Operations. Mike Garcia of the FMCSA gave a presentation on the new hours-of-service rule. Alan Frew, task force chair, said the task force endorsed the new rule. He raised the question of whether the subcommittee was prepared to comment

or make recommendations on the new rule or whether this question would have to be taken back to the CEOs. Lawrance Smith, filling in for Mike Akridge who was unable to attend the SCOHT meeting, briefly summarized activities of the ITS America CVO Committee. Joel Hiatt of the FMCSA gave a presentation on nationwide CVISN activities. A copy of his PowerPoint presentation is also included with the meeting proceedings.

Truck Size and Weight Task Force

The size and weight task force, chaired by Ric Athey, discussed oversize loads, uniformity of fines, the TRB study, and reauthorization issues. There was considerable discussion about State attitudes toward changes in truck size and weight limits in other states. Rick Athey indicated that copies of a South Dakota videotape that effectively illustrates impacts of overloaded vehicles would be distributed to interested subcommittee members. Rob Harrison of the University of Texas gave a presentation on some of his work on truck size and weight issues, including a review of trucking issues in cross-border trade. A copy of his PowerPoint presentation is included in the meeting proceedings. Lisa Mullings of the National Association of Truck Stop Operators (NATSO) discussed truck parking issues. She indicated that 90 percent of trucks park at commercial truck stops rather than Interstate rest areas and that 96 percent of the truck stop parking is free. Ms. Mullings indicated that NATSO and the American Trucking Associations have developed a partnership to among other things oppose commercialization of Interstate rest areas. A major concern of NATSO and ATA is that commercialization of rest areas would result in a large reduction (up to 50 %) in the number of parking spaces available for truck parking. A University of Maryland study indicates that commercialization of Interstate rest areas would devastate private truck stops. Darrin Roth of ATA described a Parking Assistance Resource Center grant program that NATSO and ATA are proposing that would give grants to expand truck parking and improve lighting and security. Leo Penne briefly described the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act (SHIPA) bill that has been introduced. Among other things that bill would extend Federal truck size and weight limits to the National Highway System, limit semi trailer lengths to 53 feet, extend the LCV freeze, and limit the ability of States to interpret their grandfather rights. Mr. Penne then gave Darrin Roth from ATA and Holly Stearns from the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks the opportunity to present their positions on SHIPA. Mr. Roth asserted that if ATA removed its support for TRB's recommendations that SHIPA would go away and that it is simply a foil for progress. Ms. Stearns noted that the bill has 120 co-sponsors in the House and asserted that it will not go away because it addresses real problems.

Ms. McDonald raised the issue of truck safety and asked which if any of the task forces have responsibility for trucking safety. Security is another issue that will be important in the future. She wondered whether one or more new task forces might be needed to address these issues or whether responsibilities of one or more existing task forces might be expanded to include these issues.

Georgia raised the issue of the transport of manufactured homes. The State found that even when vehicles met HUD regulations they could have inadequate braking ability. This issue, elements of which fall within the scope of each task force, should be examined in more detail. Ric Athey volunteered to look at this in more detail.

Following the task force presentations Ms. McDonald opened the business meeting portion of the agenda. She noted that the 2004 meeting will be in Cleveland, Ohio. Jeff Honefanger confirmed that planning for that meeting is underway but that firm dates have not been set yet. Ms. McDonald volunteered to have the 2005 meeting in Vermont.

There was a reminder that the Standing Committee on Research will be soliciting research ideas for the NCHRP program. As noted earlier, those research ideas that are endorsed both by SCOHT and State DOTs have the best chance to be funded.

SCOHT's response to the U.S. DOT on the new hours-of-service rule was discussed briefly. One option would be to write a letter commending DOT on the new rule. That letter might also point out training requirements to implement the new rule and include training for both the courts and the prosecutors. Milt Schmitt will draft a letter, circulate it for comment, and a decision will be made concerning whether to send it to DOT.

Another issue brought up concerned load securement. There is still considerable uncertainty in this area. Pat McDonald wanted to get more information on this issue, including discussion that may occur at the October CVSA meeting.

The need for a security task force was revisited. Should a new task force be created to deal with the issue or should existing task forces be realigned? Leo Penne agreed that SCOHT needs to have some formal activity related to security. Task Force chairs agreed to discuss this issue in a conference call. It was noted that AASHTO has focused most of its attention on the important issue of infrastructure security, but has not paid much attention to the issue of truck security. There is a role for SCOHT in this area. For instance, a significant part of the truck security issue is related to CDLs. Some concern was expressed, however, that SCOHT not get too far beyond its traditional mandate. The subcommittee needs to keep abreast of activities outside its mandate, but not get formally involved. This topic will require further discussion.

The question was raised concerning what was needed from SCOHT with respect to reauthorization. Leo Penne indicated he would send something out to SCOHT members soliciting input on key reauthorization issues.

Leo Penne noted that proceedings of the 2002 meeting in Annapolis will be sent to everyone on a CD and that proceedings of the 2003 meeting will be distributed by CD as well, much faster than the 2002 proceedings.