

TBWG policy subgroup
Teleconference summary
September 6, 2007, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EST

Attendees

Rex Young, **Alaska Department of Transportation**; Ted Mackay, **Embassy of Canada**, Mike Makowsky, **Saskatchewan Highways & Transportation**; Chris Hoff, Tony Shallow, Allan Wilson, **Transport Canada**; Michael Avery, **U.S. Federal Highway Administration**; David Davidson, **Western Washington University, Border Policy Research Institute**; Hugh Conroy, **Whatcom Council of Governments**.

Agenda

Agenda for the call:

- 1) Roll call
- 2) Recap of action items from Chicago meeting (where we left off).
- 3) Follow-up discussion regarding above action items.
 - a. [Draft arrangements toolkit](#)
 - b. Passenger rail pre-clearance
 - c. Research products to add to TBWG library
 - i. Three publications from the Conference Board of Canada (forwarded from Allan Wilson—attached)
- 4) The subcommittee's Issues & Status list: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/border_planning/us_canada/subcommittees/issues_and_status.cfm
- 5) Other current policy issues
 - a. Reports of large increases in border delay for travelers.
 - b. Others
- 6) October Montreal TBWG Plenary meeting
 - a. Agenda items for a policy working session.
- 7) Review of follow-up items from this meeting.

Chicago meeting follow-up items

Cross-border arrangements toolkit

Hugh noted that a draft of the toolkit had been sent out by e-mail a few days ago and asked for initial feedback. Mike Makowsky felt it hit on the most relevant aspects of the existing arrangements. Mike Makowsky also suggested that good information to add to the existing version would be some history about how arrangements were formed and approved. Mike Avery recommended that the toolkit be distributed more widely. Hugh Conroy proposed sending the current version to the full TBWG list. It was also suggested that the TBWG infrastructure-needs compendium includes additional contacts from specific border-regions who would likely be good sources of information on additional arrangements that should be noted on this compilation.

Pre-clearance for U.S.-Canada cross-border passenger rail

Hugh reviewed how, at the Chicago meeting, it was noted that years of binational work went into the terminated negotiations on land-border pre-clearance at the Fort Erie bridge and that it may be possible for these efforts to have application to affecting passenger-rail pre-clearance.

Ted Mackay gave an overview of recently passed US legislation: the Implementing Recommendations of the 9-11 Commission Act of 2007. Sec. 1523 of this new law, titled, Northern Border Railroad Passenger Report, instructs the US Transportation Security Administration to research and report back on several points related to the feasibility of pre-screening passenger and freight-rail. Ted will send text of the act for distribution to the group.

Hugh asked for comments on what TBWG and more specifically our subcommittee should do with this issue. David Davidson suggested that we find out what U.S. office and staff are working on the legislated reporting requirement and then make inquiries about what role TBWG might help facilitate. Ted Mackay will look into that. Ted added that the list of issues in section 1523 get into legislative issues. Ted also mentioned that there are some possible differences with requirements for cross-border ferry travel that were legislated in 2006.

Widespread reports of extremely long delays entering the U.S. from Canada

Reports have been coming in from multiple locations that delay at U.S. land-border stations have been much worse this summer. Tony Shallow referred to a recent news article in The Bar Code titled, *Summer from Hell*. Hugh Conroy agreed that the WA & BC borders were also experiencing much longer delays than recent summers. Hugh added that, at least for the WA-BC crossing, higher delays over last summer are not apparently a function of higher auto volumes. This has been widely assumed because the Canadian Dollar is about 10 cents stronger than summer 2006. It was concluded that inspection-agency representatives to TBWG should be asked to comment at the Montreal meeting as to any operational changes that may be causing longer delays.

Research products & the TBWG library

Hugh noted reports that have been forwarded by Allan Wilson. Allan also forwarded a template for article summaries. If any TBWG member reads an article or other research publication that they would like to share with other TBWG participants, they are invited to fill out a summary-sheet.

Issues & Status List

This updated list of policy subgroup topics and products is now available via a link on the [policy-page of the TBWG website](#). The list is also inclusive of links to the arrangements-toolkit and other information.

Other issues

Mike Avery reminded the group of a request for research proposals from the (US) Transportation Research Board (TRB) a couple of months ago. Mike suggested that it would be a good idea to submit some of the research this group has discussed.

Mike Avery mentioned that a call for topics is out from the FHWA Office of Freight for their 2008 web-conference series called Talking Freight. Milit Schmidt agreed that this might be a good venue and time-frame for FMCSA to review the Canadian Issues Study. Mike Avery will follow up with submitting this idea to the Talking Freight program.

Montreal meeting

The group decided to conduct a meeting at the upcoming TBWG in Montreal on October 24. The agenda will be developed via future e-mail.