

TMACOG FREIGHT COMMITTEE AGENDA & MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 11 a.m.

1. Welcome and introductions – Ray Huber
2. Ohio Turnpike Future - Continued – Christine Drennen

At the April Freight Steering Committee meeting, Christine presented a document (Ohio Turnpike Lease: A Framework for Discussion) to help stakeholders consider all factors related to a possible Ohio Turnpike lease. The committee agreed that whether you are for or against a lease, there is a good chance that it is going to happen, and northwest Ohio has to be ready. The region needs to speak with a unified voice on what the language of a possible lease should contain, and what northwest Ohio should get out of it.

At that meeting, it was decided that TMACOG staff would put together a one-page list of recommendations from the TMACOG Freight Committee regarding a turnpike lease. At the May 25 Freight Committee meeting, Christine presented this one-page list to the committee, which included further suggestions from committee members. The freight committee approved this final version of the recommendations. It was also decided that the freight committee would not take a “for” or “against” stand on the turnpike issue at this time and that this list of recommendations would be a more practical course of action.

The next step will be to seek approval from the TMACOG Transportation Council, of which the freight committee is a sub-committee. The committee has suggested that this document could be shared with other organizations that have the same concerns and may lend their support, or it could become part of a letter to those making a decision on the future of the turnpike. Staff will keep the committee updated on any developments concerning this important issue.

Both the “Framework for Discussion” and the “TMACOG Freight Committee Recommendations” documents were distributed to all committee members. If you need either document, please contact Roger Streiffert at streiffert@tmacog.org. The recommendations document will also be posted to the Freight Committee web page at www.tmacog.org.

3. Competing Truck Weight limit Bills – Roger Streiffert

Two competing bills regarding national truck weight limits have been introduced to the U.S. Congress, and below is a quick overview of these bills.

H.R.763; S.747: Safe and Efficient Transportation Act of 2011 (SETA)

H.R. 1574; S.876: Safe highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act (SHIPA)

Main points of interest from each bill:

SETA – Gross weight of vehicles would increase to 97,000 lbs. with at least 6 axles.

SHIPA – Keep gross weight of vehicles at 80,000 lbs.

Organizations in support of SETA:

- American Trucking Association
- American Forest and Paper Association

- Coalition for Transportation Productivity

Organizations in support of SHIPA:

- Association of American Railroads
- Owner/Operators Independent Drivers Association
- Teamsters
- Coalition against Bigger Trucks
- Washington State Patrol Troopers

Those organizations supporting SETA have claimed:

- Increased competitiveness with other countries that have a higher weight limit (Great Britain – 97k, Canada – 103k average, and Mexico – 107k)
- Because 6 trucks at 97k can carry load of 7 trucks at 80k – fewer trips needed, less fuel used, one less truck on the road is a safety plus, less air pollution
- Truck trailers can be filled to total capacity with no unused space
- Increase in weight per trip increases shipping efficiency
- Weight per tire will be the same with 6 axles and will not increase road damage
- Stopping distance will be the same with the extra axle

Those organizations supporting SHIPA have claimed:

- Heavier weight results in longer stopping distance, slower reaction to hazards, less control on snow and ice, more difficult to control on hill decent
- Inexperienced drivers will have vehicle control problems
- Safety issues with the extra weight will result in higher accident and fatality rates
- Increase in damage to pavement and accelerated deterioration of bridges (of which nearly half in the nation are more than 40 years old)
- Will result in a tax increase for all drivers to pay for increased infrastructure repairs
- Accelerated wear on trucks (especially brakes and tires) will be a safety issue

Committee member Mike Schneider reported that the Toledo Trucking Association supports SETA as does the Ohio Trucking Association. He also said that if SETA passes, it would take several years for many trucking companies to take advantage of the new rules if they need to upgrade their equipment to six axles, which is expensive. Some companies are already six-axle equipped and could move to 97,000 lbs. quickly.

For details on the bills and to track progress, visit www.govtrack.us. Staff will keep the committee updated on any developments.

4. Other business/discussion – All

There will be a Toledo Harbor Sediment Management and Use Solutions Public Forum on Thursday, June 16th at the Toledo Maritime Center. Information on the forum was sent to all committee members. Please contact Roger Streiffert (streiffert@tmacog.org) or Joe Cappel (jcappel@toledoportauthority.org) for details.

5. Adjourn