



Texas Department of Transportation

Land Transportation Standards Subcommittee Quarterly Report



April 2003

International Relations Office

Introduction

The Land Transportation Standards Subcommittee (LTSS) was created under the auspices of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The primary goal of the LTSS is to examine the land transportation regulatory regimes of Mexico, Canada and the United States, and work toward their harmonization.

As directed by Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 78, adopted by the 74th Legislature of the State of Texas, the following is the quarterly report on the progress of the LTSS and its related groups. This report has been prepared by the International Relations Office of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and covers the quarter ending March 31, 2003.

This report begins with a summary of general LTSS and related activities. The sections that follow include activities of each of the LTSS Working Groups and Transportation Consultative Group Working Groups (TCGs). The report concludes with a list of planned LTSS activities. Please note that some groups have completed their mandates and are therefore not listed in this report.

The information in this report was provided by the U.S. Working Group chairs and other U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) officials, as well as published reports and information obtained from Mexican officials. The initial report, issued in September 1995, contains background material that will not be repeated here. To obtain a copy of that report or others, please contact the Texas legislative library or the TxDOT International Relations Office (IRO) at (512) 374-5326. This report and previous editions are also available on the web at www.dot.state.tx.us/iro. Additional information on previous LTSS-related work group activities is available at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Summary of General LTSS and Related Activities

In November, 2002 the moratorium on granting operating authority to Mexican motor carriers was modified. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration was directed to act on the 130 applications from the Mexican domiciled truck and bus companies seeking to transport international cargo in cross-border services in the U.S. or to provide regular route services between Mexico and the U.S. Mexican carriers and drivers are required to meet the same standards and requirements as U.S. operators. Modifying the moratorium implements the truck and bus provisions of NAFTA and will open the way to expanded Mexican truck and bus operations in the U.S.

The U.S. and Mexico continue to work on developing mechanisms for Mexico to participate in the International Registration Plan (IRP) and the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA). The working group met in Chandler, Arizona on February 11, 2003. Issues discussed covered language requirements, audit requirements, fuel tax requirements (a major concern given that Mexico handles its fuel tax totally differently than the US) and fleet base requirements. In addition the group planned how to most appropriately incorporate the Mexican states or the federal government into the decision making process.

Recommendations regarding these issues will be submitted to the member jurisdiction's elected officials. A most critical step is the early inclusion of Mexican officials in the planning process.

Planning for the next LTSS plenary meeting is in progress, it is scheduled for May 28-29, 2003 in San Antonio, Texas.

Summary of LTSS Working Group Activities

Working Group 1: Driver and Vehicle Standards and Supervision of Motor Carrier Compliance

U.S. Chair: Tom Kozlowski, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
No new information was reported for the quarter.

Working Group 2: Vehicle Weights and Dimensions

U.S. Chair: Jim March, Federal Highway Administration
No new information was reported for the quarter; however a meeting is planned prior to the LTSS Plenary in May.

Working Group 5: Hazardous Materials Standards

U.S. Chair: Robert Richard, Research and Special Programs Administration

No new information was reported for the quarter.

Summary of Transportation Consultative Group Activities

TCG Working Group 1: Cross Border Operations and Facilitation

U.S. Chair: Maria C. Lameiro, U.S. Department of Transportation

This group met in Mexico City on April 18, 2003. It began to revise its mandate and develop priorities for future work.

Transportation Consultative Group 3: Automated Data Exchange

U.S. Chair: Angie Sebastian, Federal Highway Administration

No new information was reported for the quarter.

TCG Working Group 4: Science and Technology

U.S. Chair: Richard Biter, U.S. Department of Transportation

No new information was reported for the quarter.

TCG Working Group 5: Maritime and Port Policy

U.S. Chair: Gregory Hall, Maritime Administration

No new information was reported for the quarter.