



Texas Department of Transportation

Land Transportation Standards Subcommittee Quarterly Report



January 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 December 31, 2002.

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, 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 on November 7, however there was no Mexican representation as had been anticipated. A three tier plan for bringing Mexico into the program is being developed which may include trip permits, having border states serve as base states for Mexican carriers, and eventually, full participation in the agreements. The next scheduled meeting will be on February 11, 2003 in Chandler, Arizona.

Discussions for the next LTSS plenary meeting are in progress. Tentative timeframe for the meeting is late March or early April 2003.

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.

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

No new information was reported for the quarter.

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: Tim Klein, 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.