



Texas Department of Transportation

Land Transportation Standards Subcommittee Quarterly Report



October 2004

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 has been 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 June 30, 2004. No activities were reported for this quarter.

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). 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

Early in June 2004, the US Supreme Court overturned an appellate decision and unanimously found that the Bush Administration could lift a moratorium allowing Mexican trucks to operate in the U.S. without a full environmental impact study- thus ending the moratorium on Mexican trucks crossing the border.

The U.S. and Mexico are still working on developing mechanisms for Mexico to participate in the International Registration Plan (IRP) and the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA). At the present time, there exists a three stage plan for incorporating Mexico into the IRP. Stage One involves Trip permitting (target date of Fall 2005), Stage Two provides for four border states functioning as "base Jurisdictions" for Mexican carriers, and Stage Three includes full Mexican participation in IRP and IFTA (target date of Fall 2009).

The annual LTSS Plenary Session took place in Mexico City on June 3 & 4, 2004. At the time of this writing, the annual report from the plenary has not yet been issued, hence is not included in this report. At the plenary session, the Mexican delegation was headed by Carlos Gonzales Narvaez, Director General for Motor Carrier Transportation, at the Secretariat of Communications and Transport. The Canadian delegation was headed by Helena Borges, Acting Director General of Surface Transportation Policy at Transport Canada. The American delegation was headed up by Bernestine Allen, Director of the Office of International Transportation and Trade/OST.

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: 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.