

CSP/CDOT Hazardous Materials Statewide Routing Partnership

Grand Junction, Rifle & Silverthorne Meetings

December 6 - 8, 2011

Meeting Summaries

Background

The partnership's purpose is to conduct a comprehensive review of the effects of the current implementation of the "Hazardous Materials Transportation Act of 1987," §§42-20-101, et seq, C.R.S. (HMTA) to implement programs and processes that ensure the Legislative intent is being effectively and efficiently accomplished.

Stakeholder meetings are being convened throughout the state to:

1. Conduct a review of the state's routing system on a regional basis.
2. Identify regional and any broader, statewide issues needing attention, not to defend the status quo.
3. Receive input regarding the issues identified.
4. Initiate actions working towards resolutions/improvements.

Meetings Summaries:

Grand Junction:

Discussions at the meeting included the following:

Routing: General

Regional points of contact are distributed at each meeting. The primary points of contact are the troopers assigned to each region. The troopers are subject matter experts on most hazardous materials issues and have access to additional experienced personnel. Accordingly, the attendees were encouraged to avail themselves of the troopers' expertise on any issue of concern – preferably before they arise.

Routing: Transportation Security Agency (TSA)

Though TSA never transports live explosives, a TSA representative advised TSA does routinely transport inert "explosive" training aids in Western Colorado. Most vehicles

transporting the training aids have government license plates, but a few vehicles have private license plates. All such vehicles are appropriately marked.

Routing: Local Pickup and Delivery

One attendee operates a business on River Road – a nondesignated route – near Grand Junction and asked about criteria that would govern a permissible route from his business to access Southbound US 50. Travelling from his location eastward along River Road, through Grand Junction, to intercept US 50, near Whitewater, CO, was appreciably shorter than proceeding westward along River Road to I-70, then eastward along I-70 to intercept southbound US 50 near Clifton and then to Whitewater. Based upon the premise that operators should not be required to “go around their elbows to get to their thumbs,” the Patrol advised that in this instance the carrier’s drivers could travel the straighter route to get to US 50, barring any restrictions on going through Grand Junction.

Rifle:

Discussions at the meeting included the following:

Routing: Local Enforcement Authority

The Patrol explained that local law enforcement is fully empowered to cite violations of Colorado’s hazardous materials routing statute.

Routing: Loveland Pass & I-70

The designation of US 6 over Loveland Pass generated a number of questions and observations. The general consensus was that Loveland Pass was not a desirable hazardous materials route. It was similarly understood that routinely routing hazardous materials through the Eisenhower Tunnel was not a particularly favorable option, given the enormous economic ramifications an incident in the tunnel would likely entail. Recognizing the heavy costs of significantly improving the operational circumstances in either venue, it was proposed that the pursuit of less drastic measures based on new technologies might be a valuable avenue of inquiry.

On this topic, CDOT also advised the attendees of the activities of the I-70 Coalition. The Coalition includes jurisdictions from Denver to Vail and exists to study transportation issues along the I-70 Central Mountain Corridor. The Coalition meets quarterly, and its meetings are open to the public.

Routing: Local Pickup and Delivery

After a lengthy discussion of the local pickup and delivery criteria, the Patrol advised that should a local law enforcement agency offer a different interpretation, the Patrol would seek a meeting with that agency to resolve any conflict. The meeting would be the responsibility of the HAZMAT team assigned the region in which the issue arose.

Routing: Uranium Shipments

When advised that uranium shipments had been seen on I-70 West, the Patrol explained that 1) uranium ore is not particularly dangerous, possessing “background” radiation levels, and 2) wastes from mining, milling, smelting or similar processing of ores and mineral-bearing materials are not restricted to designated routes.

Silverthorne:

Discussions at the meeting included the following:

Routing: Loveland Pass & I-70

The Eisenhower Tunnel/Loveland Pass issue was the only topic discussed at this meeting. Participants expressed concern over the transport of hazardous materials on both I-70 and US 6, particularly as they descend westbound into the Silverthorne area. White River and Dillon Dam environmental issues and the US 6 straightaway through Keystone to Silverthorne were among the issues presented.

Regarding a petition to modify US 6, CDOT explained that any such petition would have to be coordinated with the jurisdictions along the route. Local entities can request CDOT to petition the modification of any highway maintained by the state within their jurisdictions. Local entities may also independently petition the Patrol to modify routes within their jurisdiction. In each instance, CDOT strongly advised that as much coordination as possible should be effected before a petition is submitted to either CDOT or the Patrol.

I- The CDOT’s Eisenhower Tunnel Manager and Regional Engineer indicated they were receptive to any ideas that might improve hazardous materials transportation along the 70 Central Mountain Corridor. They also described some actions they’ve taken to address the situation. For example, they’ve widened the shoulders along US 6. They’ve also conducted studies on various aspects of the issue. One examined the transport of hazardous materials through the tunnel on a “restricted” schedule. Another determined that a significant hazardous materials incident in the Tunnel would have enormous economic consequences for Western Colorado. Thus far, CDOT has identified

no option that would significantly minimize the participants' concerns in the near-term.

In recognition of the participants' concerns, the Patrol advised it would intensify its enforcement activities within the area, particularly on US 6 near Keystone. Furthermore, the Patrol will publicize those activities to ensure the local communities are aware of its efforts.

Given the magnitude/cost of the options more typically raised to address the I- 70/ Loveland Pass issue, it was proposed that less costly options, predicated upon new technologies, be brainstormed to identify lesser measures to improve the corridor in the nearer term.

One attendee observed that private industry also worries about Loveland Pass, but there appears to be no economically feasible alternative. For instance, even assuming there was a potentially less troublesome route, the additional mileage would measurably increase costs for all.

As the meeting concluded, there was a consensus that much had been done to address the issues concerning the area's residents, businesses, law enforcement and commercial operators. The participants were encouraged to continue and expand the dialogue that has already occurred. Though resolution of the larger issues may have to wait, energetic, cooperative discussions could identify interim measures that might improve the safety and operational viability of the routes.