

**Chapters 553/554, 2018 Acts of Assembly
Stakeholders Working Group**

July 27, 2018

Participants: see sign-in rosters

General notes:

- Not meeting at VDOT facility, so next meeting (if we have it) may be somewhere else
- Move to Gmail has made email tricky, so please check your spam folders if you haven't seen something, but expect it
- Will be taking notes, but eventually be seeking written comments from stakeholders
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Overview of Study/working group (Maxwell/McGhee): see PPT

- Keith Wandtke will be conduit between Study Team and stakeholders
- Bill language will dictate the scope of the study
- No Federal legislation exists for a pilot but some language exists that provides insight to vehicle weight and configuration, evaluation requirements, and participation
- Study Purpose and Scope/Study Outline – see PPT
 - o Likely outcome – data requirements for the evaluation of any pilot that would be undertaken
 - o Recommendations

Questions from the Stakeholder Working Group –

- Joe (VACO)
 - o Need to consider the existing condition of pavements and bridges
 - o Concern about what will be required to accommodate the heavier trucks
- Ron Jenkins (Loggers association)
 - o Support the original bill
 - o Already have permitted legal loads that exceed 80k limit on non-interstate highways
 - o Should accommodate 90k legal permit for hauling trees from harvest to mill on non-interstate
- Ken Hutcheson(Anheuser Busch)
 - o Companies want to be efficient in transporting
 - o No one interested in increase in threats to public safety or accelerated deterioration of highways/bridges
 - o Believe data exists that indicates pilot could be implemented safely with little to no impact on roads and bridges

- 50 states already allow overweight on Primaries/Interstates/30 for Interstates
- Advocate for collection of more data
- Significant benefits – 1 foot reduction in stopping distances /reduction in pavement costs/enforcement costs/congestion costs reduction/fuel consumption/CO2/lower logistics costs – data will be submitted with written comments
- Matt Wells (Westrock Papermills)
 - Contribute \$1B to Virginia economy every year
 - Largest exporter in state of Virginia
 - 3M tons of product every year
 - Hit weight limit before they cube out
 - Shortage of truckers is a challenge for the industry and fewer, fuller trucks could help
 - Higher weight limits would make them more competitive – across country and world
 - Virginia already have trucks running well over 80K lbs using various exemptions
 - Believe there is data to support that a change in the legal load would not have negative impacts to the infrastructure or safety
- Scott Johnson (International Paper)
 - Will submit written comments – concur with hauler/paper
- Rob Bohannon (Hunter Andrews – Representing Norfolk Southern)
 - Rail maintains own infrastructure
 - Trucks contribute some to infrastructure maintenance, but not much
- Tretiak (Hefty, Wiley, and Gore for Miller-Coors)
 - Would like to support the comments made by Anheuser Busch
 - Most loads ship on Interstate (plant is 15 miles from I-81)
 - I-81 corridor improvement plan underway now – this study should interface with that one
 - They estimate that a 6-axle, 91,000 lb tractor trailer would reduce the number of trucks by 16% (4000 fewer trucks on I-81)
 - Currently spend \$58M a year on shipping
 - Reference Canada/Mexico where already higher loads
- Port of Virginia (Dusty Meyer)
 - Neutral on the issue of heavier trucks
 - Looking at port infrastructure – cranes to be sure they can accommodate heavier loads
 - Fewer, heavier loads could reduce “moves”
 - Mainly just want to be present in discussions
- Matt Gordon (Anheuser Busch)
 - In their opinion, increasing the load is common sense
 - Currently send 50k truck loads per year out of Williamsburg facility
 - As stated earlier, it is hard to find truck drivers
 - Spreading the load out further, across an additional axle, it’s bound to be better for the infrastructure
 - Previous study showed a 1-foot improved stopping distance due to the additional axle
 - Accident exposure, congestion, could benefit from fewer trucks
 - Written comments to come

- Tim Bentely (Norfolk Southern)
 - o Only Class 1 Railroad Headquartered in Virginia
 - o Must consider benefits to Commonwealth (if any) and not just benefits to industry
 - o Consideration of pilot participation should also include record-keeping costs and maintenance costs of pilot
 - o It would appear that the Federal pilot (as currently understood) would not include funding for participating states to alleviate additional costs
 - o Current legal loads (80k lb trucks) only cover 80% of actual costs to roads
 - o Rail is good partner in State
 - o None of the ports are located immediately on Interstates, so heavier trucks serving the port would have to travel on non-interstate roads, causing addition damage to them
- Chris LaGow (Property Casualty Insurers)
 - o Serious concerns about increased weights – profound lack of data to support that heavier is safer and concern that appropriate data won't be available in the near future, too much inconsistency across states
 - o Often don't get weight of truck with data from crash records
 - o Crash rates for 6-axle 47 to 400% higher than 5-axle trucks, according to 2015 Truck Size and Weight Study
 - o Out of service violations – heavier trucks have higher rate out-of-service violations – more likely to be involved in crashes
 - o Will submit statistics with written comments
- Bret Vassey (Virginia Manufacturers Assoc.)
 - o Asked whether the study will consider other state/country experiences? Canada/Mexico currently allow heavier trucks
 - o This is a multi-state issue – NY, VA, PA, and TN
 - o Manufacture these big trucks/trailers in Virginia
 - o Glad to host meeting to discuss this technology
 - o Committed only if it's safe and affordable
 - o Bottom line is competition – these data points could be key
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- Study Team comment – All stakeholders should think about what a good pilot would look like – what would be required to make it meaningful (e.g., multiple, contiguous states, evaluation data, truck configuration, etc.)
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- Dale Bennett (Virginia Trucking Association)
 - o The trucking industry is very diverse and there are people on both side of this issue
 - o Will need to look at costs to actual truck operators – retrofit or new trailer/trucks
 - o Companies that haul by weight, can recoup the cost of retrofitting. If they are paid by mile, that's more difficult
 - o Depending on the final configuration, some trailers may be made obsolete
 - o There are positive and negative aspects to truckers
- Jeff Palmore (Smithfield Foods)

- Participation in the pilot will provide benefits to commonwealth
- The pilot evaluation should include an assessment of CO2 impact? Fewer trucks will result in lower emissions.
- Pilot could help efficiency/carbon footprint state and nation-wide
- Ken Hutcheson (Anheuser Busch)
 - Achieving a public benefit is important
 - Fee permitting process would be put in place and believe in paying for the process and the data collection/analysis required
 - Believe it will be important to establish a collaborative process with VDOT to determine routing over non-interstate routes.
 - Are we getting ahead of ourselves given that there is no existing pilot currently
 - Focus now should be on issues that would be raised if Virginia gets chance to participate in Federal pilots
 - Current federal weight limits set in 1982
 - There continues to be a well-documented shortage of truck drivers
 - As a shipper, they anticipate reimbursing truck driver/operators for additional costs for added weight
- Cannon Moss (Virginia railroad association)
 - Represents 7 short-lines that run throughout Virginia
 - Trucks that are heavier will take more business away from short lines
 - Study should address how will bigger trucks affect short-lines
- Randy Marcus (CSX)
 - Freight moving by rail currently offset about 4M trucks
 - They estimate a 19% shift to trucks with heavier loads, so we may not see a reduction in the number of trucks on the road
 - No federal programs offering money to offset increased damage to roads/bridges
- Katie Hellebush (VA agribusiness Association)
 - Very supportive of the pilot program
- Paul Howe (Virginia Forestry)
 - Sawmill community very interested in what study might yield
 - Biggest challenges to forestry industry is transportation costs
 - Hoping the pilot will move forward.
- Virginia Loggers
 - Referred to a study in Maine and Vermont – 100k gross weight allowances
 - Agree that there should be a balance between public safety and productivity
 - Although we love railroads, there's a limit to where they reach – need to operate effectively across both modes
 - Trucking pays fuel tax and purchase overweight permits, contributing towards their fair share

General Conversation/Questions

- From trucking perspectives, what sort of axle spacing are we considering?
 - Answers hopefully available for next meeting
 - Will be very important to the discussion
- Routes on and off and routes regarding bridges
 - How does DMV administer program now?
 - Seems to be working pretty well
- Written comments do August 10th – will there be comments accepted later – Yes
- Comments will be shared with stakeholders
- Remember to share any references that might provide useful data that would support more effective study
- Anticipate putting together an annotated bibliography
- Notes will be prepared from today's meeting and distributed to participants

Next Steps

- Additional Stakeholder meetings – Thursday Sept, 13 and Fri Nov. 9th
- Please share written responses to Keith Wandtke
- Meeting adjourned – 11:10am