

Idaho Transportation Board

129,000 Pound Truck Route Subcommittee

January 19, 2016

Idaho Transportation Board (ITB) 129,000 Pound Truck Route Subcommittee Chairman Jim Kempton called the meeting to order at 3 PM on Tuesday, January 19 in the auditorium at the Idaho Transportation Department, Boise, Idaho. ITB Vice Chairman Jim Coleman and Members Jan Vassar and Dwight Horsch were present. ITB Member Julie DeLorenzo was also in attendance; however, only as an observer.

Principal Subcommittee staff members and advisors in attendance included Deputy Attorney General Larry Allen, Chief Operations Officer and Acting Chief Engineer (ACE) Jim Carpenter, Highway Safety Manager John Tomlinson, Freight Program Manager (FPM) Jeff Marker, Public Involvement Coordinator (PIC) Adam Rush, Motor Vehicle Administrator (MVA) Alan Frew, Bridge Management Engineer Dan Gorley, Executive Assistant to the Board Sue Higgins, Idaho State Police (ISP) Major Bill Reese, Local Highway Technical Assistance Council Administrator Jeff Miles, and Trucking Advisory Council Chairman John Pocock.

District 2 Engineer Dave Kuisti and other staff members participated via video conference.

January 21, 2015 Meeting Minutes. Chairman Kempton noted that the minutes of the January 21, 2015 meeting were distributed earlier, and, upon concurrence of the Subcommittee, were finalized and posted on the website. Without objection, those minutes will stand.

Case #201511: SH-13, Milepost (MP) 0.0 to 26.39. ACE Carpenter said the Division of Motor Vehicles confirmed that SH-13 falls under the blue route category allowing 95-foot overall vehicle length and a 5.5-foot off-track. The bridge analysis determined that the seven bridges on the route will safely support vehicle combinations up to 129,000 pounds, assuming the axle configuration conforms to the legal requirements.

ACE Carpenter said District 2's analysis of SH-13 indicates the roadway is generally in good condition with 11-foot lanes. The shoulder widths range from 0 to 2 feet. Although staff is not aware of any spring breakup limits being imposed in the past, there may be a need to invoke such limits from MP 0.0 to 5.8 because this section of roadway is in poor condition. The maintenance foremen expressed some concern with off-tracking; however, an onsite review of vehicle combinations was conducted and found that the vehicles were able to maintain their lane. The corridor has two high accident location segments; however, a review of the five-year safety data indicates the addition of 129,000 pound tractor trailer combinations should not have a significant impact on safety. Port of Entry (POE) staff believes there are adequate locations along the route to monitor commercial vehicles for compliance.

ACE Carpenter addressed some of the public comments received in opposition of the route request. In reviewing information on vehicle inspections during the past five years, the majority of citations were related to noncompliance with size and weight requirements. Regarding the concern with vehicles operating during inclement winter weather, administrative rules prohibit operating under hazardous conditions.

Based on the analyses and information available, ACE Carpenter recommends proceeding with the SH-13 route request.

Member Vassar noted the controversy on this request and the number of public comments received opposing the route designation. There are two high accident locations along the route; there is concern with the condition of the pavement; the shoulder width is narrow or non-existent in some sections; there are no passing lanes; and not all commercial vehicle drivers are experienced.

Member Horsch asked how many of the crashes on SH-13 involved commercial motor vehicles. District 2 Traffic Engineer Jared Hopkins said the five-year data listed 100 total accidents with 8 of those involving a truck. Member Horsch said permitted vehicles up to 105,500 pounds currently operate on SH-13. The 129,000 pound vehicle configurations have more axles, and thus, more brakes. In his opinion, if the highway can accommodate 105,500 pound trucks, it should be able to accommodate vehicles hauling up to 129,000 pounds. He added that he has some concern with inexperienced drivers.

In response to an earlier question on the number of trucks that would operate at 129,000 pounds versus 105,500, FPM Marker said that the applicant, Arlo G. Lott Trucking, believes it will reduce the number of trucks on SH-13 by 500 annually.

Chairman Kempton referenced comments received concerning friction and slick roads, affecting the braking distance. ACE Carpenter acknowledged that braking capacity was a general concern. Idaho Code addresses braking requirements for all trucks. Member Kempton asked if the vehicles have to be inspected. MVA Frew replied no, there is no inspection requirement, only a requirement for the vehicles to be in good operating condition. In response to Member Kempton's comment on the concern with inexperienced drivers, MVA Frew acknowledged that ITD has no control on the amount of experience drivers have.

Chairman Kempton asked if there are adequate roving ports of entry in the area. MVA Frew responded that there are two roving sites in the vicinity. He added that there are staffing concerns in District 2. (NOTE: after the meeting, MVA Frew corrected that statement. There is only one roving POE in the area.)

Mr. Pocock believes 129,000 pound vehicle configurations are safer because of their additional axles.

Because trucks can currently operate at weights up to 105,500 pounds, Member Coleman believes the only change that would result if 129,000 pound trucks are permitted is improved safety because there would be fewer trucks on the road.

Chairman Kempton expressed concern with the lack of safety precautions. He suggested implementing inspections or ensuring the drivers are good and experienced. He understands the benefits of allowing 129,000 pound vehicles, but also sees potential risks.

Member Vassar agreed that safety and driver qualifications should be considered along with enforcement. Although she relies on the expertise of ITD staff, she also has to consider the public comments.

Member Coleman said if safety of the route is the main concern, maybe 105,500 pound vehicles should not be allowed because the configurations are essentially the same.

Member Vassar made a motion to deny the SH-13 request. The motion died due to the lack of a second.

Member Coleman made a motion to send the 129,000 pound truck route request for SH-13, MP 0.0 to 26.39, to the Transportation Board with a recommendation to approve the application. Member Horsch seconded the motion.

Because safety is so important, Member Coleman suggested reviewing the rule requirements. He added that there is a permitting process that addresses some safety issues.

MVA Frew reminded the Subcommittee that ISP Major Reese is on the agenda later to discuss large trucks and safety at the national level. Without objection, Chairman Kempton called on Major Reese to make his presentation at this time.

Large Trucks and Safety at the National Level. Major Reese said he has been involved with commercial motor vehicle issues at the state and national level for over 20 years. ISP works in partnership with the POE, including on inspections. Nationwide, the majority of crashes involve passenger vehicles, not commercial vehicles.

The Western States Transportation Alliance approved a resolution in 2013 to address safety issues related to 129,000 pound vehicles. He encouraged Idaho to consider steps to raise the bar on safety and volunteered to participate in those efforts.

In response to Member Horsch's question, Major Reese said inspections result in about 20% of trucks being put out of service and about 8% of drivers put out of commission.

Member Coleman believes the administrative rules need to be strengthened and enforcement increased.

Case #201511: SH-13, MP 0.0 to 26.39, Continued. The motion to send the SH-13 request to the Board with a recommendation to approve the request failed on a 2-2 tie with Members Coleman and Horsch voting in the affirmative and Chairman Kempton and Member Vassar opposing.

Case #201510: SH-162, MP 8 to 31.07. ACE Carpenter said the Division of Motor Vehicles confirmed that the route falls under the blue route category allowing 95-foot overall vehicle length and a 5.5-foot off-track. The bridge analysis determined that the five bridges on the route will safely support vehicle combinations of 129,000 pounds, assuming the axle configuration conforms to the legal requirements.

District 2's analysis of SH-162 indicates the roadway is generally in good condition with 11-foot lanes and between 1- and 4-foot paved shoulders. The roadway is not deficient. The District recommends requiring chains in winter weather. The corridor has zero high accident location segments. A review of the five-year safety data indicates there would be little effect by the addition of 129,000 pound tractor trailer combinations. POE staff believes there are adequate locations along the route to monitor commercial vehicles for compliance.

Member Coleman suggested if chains are required for vehicle combinations between 105,500 and 129,000 pounds, they should be required for commercial trucks hauling up to 105,500 pounds.

Member Vassar said the SH-162 route request impacts three local highway jurisdictions, as the route dead-ends at its junction with Old Highway 7, but the applicant intends to utilize local roads to access US-95. FPM Marker concurred that the intent is to continue on local roads; however, those applications have not been submitted yet.

Member Coleman said the rules require requesters to submit route applications to the local jurisdictions. He made a motion to hold the SH-162, MP 8 to 31.07, route request until the requester fulfills his obligation to submit an application to the affected local highway jurisdictions. Member Horsch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Case #201512: US-12, MP 66.22 to 73.85. ACE Carpenter said the US-12 request was submitted in conjunction with the SH-162 request. Because both routes need to be approved so Arlo G. Lott Trucking can haul into and out of Kooskia, he recommended holding this request.

Member Vassar made a motion to hold the US-12, MP 66.22 to 73.85, route request until the SH-162 request is re-submitted and the two routes can be considered at the same time. Member Coleman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comments. PIC Rush reported that a public comment period was held for the three requested routes. A hearing on the SH-13 request was held on December 3 with sufficient notice to the media and affected cities. Member Vassar added that the SH-13 hearing was initially scheduled in August, but due to fires in the area, it was postponed until December. She believes adequate notification was provided.

Chairman Kempton said the Governor's transmittal letter of SB1117 required notification to adjacent land owners; however, per correspondence from the Governor's Office, it was determined that general notification through the media would be sufficient. The Department does not have to contact every individual property owner.

Federal Legislation Allowing 129,000 Pound Vehicles on Idaho's Interstate System. MVA Frew said recent federal action allows Idaho to increase its gross vehicle weight limits for permitted vehicles up to 129,000 pounds on the federal Interstate system. He believes Senator Brackett will carry the enabling legislation because revisions to Idaho Code are required.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 PM.

signed

Respectfully submitted by:
SUE S. HIGGINS
Executive Assistant & Secretary
Idaho Transportation Board