

Rail Topic Group – Steven Hamp (DOE/NTP) and Jay Jones (DOE/RW)

Rail Topic Group Discussion paper - *Steven Hamp (DOE/NTP)*

Mr. Steven Hamp started the meeting with introductions and announcing that the topic group will be co-chaired by Mr. Jay Jones. The topic group will be expanded to focus on the drafting and addressing baseline routing criteria. Before discussing the new direction that topic group will take, Steven reviewed what the focus of the topic group has been for the last two years. Namely, Steven summarized the four reports that the topic group had produced, the most recent report being a discussion paper entitled “Rail Routing-Current Practices and Comparative Analysis (2004).” All of the reports are available on the TEC web site. Steven also mentioned that the discussion paper is available for the larger TEC membership to review and provide comments.

Comments on Rail Routing Paper:

- Several members commented that the final Rail Routing paper was not formally released to the larger TEC membership for review. One member understood that the final Rail Routing paper would be released to the larger TEC audience; comments would be compiled, and then presented to the Rail Topic group for further discussion before finalizing the Rail Routing Paper. Steven Hamp responded by saying that the Topic Group has followed the protocol of other topic groups for releasing papers to the larger TEC membership. This paper is a product of the Rail Topic Group but it is anticipated that there will be further discussion from the larger TEC audience. Steven also mentioned that the discussion paper is currently on the TEC web site, thus available for review. Gary Lanthrum suggested that the topic group elicit feedback on the paper from the larger TEC.
- One participant noted that the Rail Routing paper does not address the legal weight truck cask issue and the inter-modal proposal which is different from direct rail. Steven Hamp reiterated that the paper is generic and not operation oriented.
- Another participant noted that the rail group had initially developed a list of activities to undertake with rail routing being the first. It was suggested that this list be reviewed.

Summary of the Office of National Transportation (ONT) Projects - *Jay Jones (DOE/RW)*

As an update from the April 2004 TEC meeting, Jay Jones briefly summarized the projects and initiatives being undertaken by the Office of National Transportation (ONT). ONT has made steady progress in its four project areas: Institutional, Operational Planning, Fleet Acquisition, and Nevada Rail. Judith Holm is in charge of the Institutional Program, Nancy Slater-Thompson heads up Operational Planning, Ned Larson is responsible for Fleet Acquisition and Robin Sweeney (RW/ORD) is leading the development of Nevada Rail. Jay mentioned that ONT is working with Operations to make sure all activities are integrated. Nancy Slater-Thompson has been working on transportation modeling, specifically, TRAGIS and the Investment Planning Modeling Tool. Part of the effort involves trying to inform the states on how these models work. It has been recommended that ONT set up training programs early next year for the state regional groups on these modeling programs.

Jay noted that Gary Lanthrum would provide a more detailed update of ONT's recent activities during the Program Updates session the following day. Jay turned the meeting over to Judith Holm for the route decision process discussion.

Draft Route Decision Process - *Judith Holm (DOE/RW)*

Judith Holm presented an overview of the Draft Route Decision Process Chart. Emphasizing that routing will be an iterative process; she noted that TEC is a broad-based organization involving industry, States, Tribes, professional associations, and others. It is important to capture this broad exchange of views. Information from the stakeholder meetings such as TEC can be taken back to their larger constituent groups. State regional groups will be able to go into more depth on routing criteria. Once the criteria are developed, they can be applied to the possible routes run through the Transportation Routing Analysis Geographic Information System (TRAGIS). The goal is to identify a regional suite of routes. The Transportation Logistics Model is currently in development. The end result is an operational plan and routes for campaigns.

Comments on Route Decision Process:

- One participant asked how all the information from the Rail Topic Group would come into play and how the information would be integrated. Judith responded that the information would be provided to each of the member groups which provide comments. The resulting criteria are then applied to the model. Judith also emphasized that there will still be opportunities throughout the entire process for discussion.
- Two participants raised the issue that the carrier is still unknown and, because of this uncertainty, it seems pointless to develop criteria. There also seems to be a consensus that the topic group needs to know whether DOE or whether carriers will dictate routes. Gary Lanthrum responded by stating that there is no DOE policy yet. Judith also replied that DOE needs to start somewhere and what is important is identifying criteria rather than the routes at this point in the process. In addition, DOT suggests that shippers and carriers work together to determine routes.
- One participant asked if DOE can include in the contracts that the rail company making the routing decision can also meet certain criteria. Judith responded that this could be written in the contracts.
- One participant raised the issue of dedicated trains specifically as it pertains to the State of Nevada. It was also mentioned that the State of Nevada has recently lodged a lawsuit against DOE. Gary Lanthrum responded by stating that since DOT has not issued their dedicated train study, no decision has been made by DOE on the use of dedicated trains.
- One participant inquired as to the status of the FRA study on the use of dedicated trains. Bob Fronczak, Association of American Railroads (AAR), stated that the study is supposed to be completed later this year. With regard to this study not being completed as yet, DOE does not want to delay working on the routing criteria. The information from the FRA study can be plugged into the routing criteria decision process. Gary Lanthrum reiterated that if any new regulatory information was released, DOE would certainly make the appropriate changes.
- One participant expressed concern about the clarity of what this topic group is doing and what the regional groups are doing. Currently the Midwestern groups are going through

their route decision process. Judith noted that TEC is a broad-based organization involving industry, States, Tribes, professional associations, and others. It is important to capture this broad-based viewpoint in addition to what is developed by the state regional groups.

- One participant asked what would happen if DOE does not agree with the routes suggested by the regional groups and the States. Judith responded by saying she felt that DOE and the other groups would not be that far off in terms of routing.

Draft Task Plan and Factors Matrix –Jay Jones (DOE/RW)

Jay Jones presented a draft task plan to the Topic Group with a tentative schedule that the Topic Group would follow to complete the recommendations for Baseline Routing Criteria. At the next TEC meeting, the draft Baseline Routing Criteria would be finalized. Jay stated that the dates on the schedule were based on internal milestones developed by RW. The factors matrix was given to the Topic Group as background information to demonstrate that a base exists in regulation and practice for current shipments. Jay opened the meeting up to the members to ask questions and get comments about the Task Plan and the Factors Matrix.

Comments on the Draft Task Plan and Factors Matrix:

- One participant asked how DOE was going to go forward with baseline routing criteria without knowing about dedicated trains. A suggestion was made to develop one set of routing criteria for dedicated trains and one set of criteria for general rail service. Comment noted.
- Several participants noted that it appears the Topic Group will now be addressing other modes of transportation, yet the group is called the Rail Topic Group. Jay stated that the Topic Group will focus on identifying routing criteria, addressing rail as the main mode of transportation so the topic group name should incorporate the routing activity. Steven also responded that the emphasis will be on rail and thus the topic group name should remain as such.
- One participant suggested that the purpose statement in the Draft Task Plan be broadened to include barge, highway, legal weight truck, overweight truck, etc. Jay will rewrite the purpose statement and send to the topic group for review.
- One participant suggested modifying the Draft Task Plan approach to include the identification of unique local conditions. An example that was cited was the 20-year restructuring efforts being undertaken by DOT in the Chicago area.
- Another participant noted that the word “criteria” could cover a multitude of things. They suggested that special conditions pertaining to criteria be added in the purpose statement.
- One participant asked if the factors included in the matrix were listed in any particular order. Judith responded and said that the factors presented had not been prioritized.

Action Items:

1. The purpose statement in the Draft Task Plan will be revised to include other modes of transportation, specifically barge, highway, legal weight truck and overweight truck.
2. Column Title headings will be added to every page for the Factors Matrix.

3. All comments pertaining to the Draft Work Plan and Factors Matrix should be sent to Jay Jones (DOE/RW), Julie Offner (BAH) and Michele Enders (SAIC) by October 14, 2004.
4. Jay Jones and Steven Hamp will send out an e-mail the week of September 27th detailing the issues raised during the Topic Group meeting and the proposed dates for the monthly conference calls.