

**Transportation External Coordination (TEC) Working Group  
Rail Topic Group Conference Call  
Wednesday, June 26, 2002, 4:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m. ET**

**Conference Call Minutes**

**Summary:**

The conference call began at 4:00 p.m. Eastern time on Wednesday, June 26, 2002. Participants included: **Scot Bates**, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad; **Kevin Blackwell**, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA); **Peter Bolton**, Booz-Allen and Hamilton (supporting the DOE Civilian Radioactive Waste Management Program); **Sandra Covi**, Union Pacific Railroad; **Mark Dalton**, North Carolina Highway Patrol; **Ray English**, DOE Office of Naval Reactors; **Robert Fronczak**, Association of American Railroads; **Terry Gilmore**, FRA; **Steven Hamp**, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Transportation Program (NTP); **George McKorkel**, Energy Communities Alliance/Lincoln County, NV (participating for Paul Seidler); **Phillip Paul**, Council of State Governments-Eastern Regional Conference; **Carol Peabody**, U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Transportation; **Scott Ramsay**, Western Governors' Association (Wyoming Emergency Management Agency); **Mike Rowswell**, National State Rail Managers' Association; and **Alex Thrower**, Science Applications International Corporation (TEC Working Group support).

Mr. Hamp began the meeting by briefly reviewing the action items from the last meeting of the group in New Orleans on January 28, 2002. He noted the meeting minutes had been distributed along with an updated topic group members' listing. A summary of the primary information product developed by the earlier topic group (the WIPP program implementation guide—rail comparison matrix) had also been developed. All these documents are available on the topic group website:  
<http://twilight.saic.com/newtec/rail.html>.

The discussion then focused on items raised at the New Orleans meeting, primarily on a potential concept paper examining current practices for routing rail shipments and discussing potential alternative regimes, and on a benchmarking analysis of past rail campaigns to identify successful elements of planning and execution. Mr. Blackwell reiterated his point from the January meeting, which was that rail shipment of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) has been garnering increased attention from the public, the media and in Congress. He believes it would be useful to have a paper that clearly and concisely discusses what practices are followed now and what may or may not be feasible to do differently. The group agreed to review the rail section of the earlier report developed by TEC on routing (found at <http://twilight.saic.com/newtec/rtngpaper.pdf>). Given the relatively summary-level information in that report, developments in the industry since then, and the emergence of other documents such as the DOE transportation protocols, it was suggested that such an issue paper could be timely, and could be developed using readily available information. A participant suggested the group review the draft routing

protocol as well, and Mr. Thrower agreed to distribute this draft document and the routing report to the group.

Mr. Ramsay noted that rail routing had become a big issue in Wyoming, not only because of the upcoming Congressional vote on Yucca Mountain, but because several candidates for public office have made radioactive materials transportation an issue in their campaign. Mr. Blackwell noted that Congressional interest in rail transport had prompted several studies and specific proposals in legislation.

Participants suggested it would be helpful if, after looking at the reports referenced above, the group drafted a brief outline describing the scope of the report. Then, once the outline had been finalized, different parts of the report could be assigned to various parties based on their backgrounds, much like the earlier routing report had been developed. Ms. Covi, Mr. Fronczak and others emphasized that a clear definition of current industry practices for rail routing would be an important part of the effort. It was decided that Mr. Hamp and Mr. Blackwell work with Mr. Thrower to develop this outline; Mr. Blackwell said he would coordinate his review with Mr. Fronczak and other interested railroad participants.

One participant suggested it would be helpful to have some readily understandable presentation materials or other information products for use by officials in trying to explain this topic. Mr. Paull and others noted the Communications Topic Group was still in operation, and if the rail group developed an issue paper it might be appropriate to turn it over to the other group for potential information products development.

The potential rail campaign “benchmarking” effort was briefly discussed, and while there appeared to be general support for developing such a report, the consensus seemed to be that the group should focus first on the rail routing issue paper and then concentrate on the benchmarking effort.

Mr. Ramsay next updated the group on the work being done on the WIPP Rail Program Implementation Guide by the WGA committee. He indicated that there were three outstanding issues that the committee is working on. They are: 1) rail inspection protocols, particularly how to answer the question of requirements for various inspections, including those shipments moving in general freight; 2) bad weather conditions; and 3) emergency response, especially associated with bad weather conditions. The second and third issues are closely linked, Mr. Ramsay said, because while trains may be able to operate in inclement weather, if an incident occurred requiring response assets it may be difficult to reach the incident scene using trucks or other conveyances. There was considerable discussion on this topic from a number of participants, including some helpful information from both Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Fronczak. Mr. English mentioned some of the experiences in shipping Naval SNF and current industry standards and procedures.

The group agreed to schedule a follow-up call after reviewing the previously-developed materials and the draft outline was made available. The call adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.

**Action Items:**

1. Alex Thrower will send the group copies of the TEC routing paper and the draft routing protocol.
2. Steve Hamp, Alex Thrower and Kevin Blackwell will develop a brief outline and scope of a rail routing discussion paper and circulate to the group for review and comment.
3. Another call will be scheduled after the group has had an opportunity to review the above-referenced materials and a draft outline has been developed.

Special Note: due to time constraints, we were unable to discuss another potential item of interest which should be an important resource for the rail topic group. The Transportation Resource Exchange Center (T-REX), sponsored by DOE/NTP, has prepared a Rail Transport of RAM Annotated Bibliography. This bibliography is an excellent resource for topic group members and is available through the T-REX web site at <http://www.trex-center.org/railbib.asp>. Group participants are encouraged to review the materials available on this site, and also submit other information on rail transport of RAM to the T-REX center as a way to expand the annotated bibliography and keep it current.