Dear RESMA:

I was appointed to the US DOT Emergency Route Working Group (ERWG) by the administrator of USDOT. The purpose of the group is to make a recommendation to USDOT with regard to best practices for expeditious State approval of special permits for vehicles involved in emergency response & recovery.

To that end, the working group is to consider whether:

1. Impediments currently exist that prevent expeditious State approval of special permits for vehicles involved in emergency response & recovery;

2. it is possible to pre-identify & establish emergency routes between States through which infrastructure repair materials could be delivered following a natural disaster or emergency;

3. a State could pre-designate an emergency route identified under paragraph (2) as a certified emergency route if a motor vehicle that exceeds the otherwise applicable Federal & State truck length or width limits may safely operate along such route during periods of declared emergency & recovery from such periods; &

4. An online map could be created to identify each pre-designated emergency route under paragraph (3), including information on specific limitations, obligations, & notification requirements along that route.

The group consists of representatives from:

 a) State DOTs

 b) Modal agencies of the Department

 c) Emergency response & recovery experts

 d) Relevant safety groups; & entities affected by special permit restrictions during emergency response & recovery efforts.

Our administrative meeting was held on Friday, January 6th, & in what I believe was my first mistake of 2017, I was elected Chair of the group. Mike Temple, from Alabama Statewide is also a member of group, along with a representative from Alabama Power, Georgia Power, Florida Power & Light, & Empire (Missouri). We had representatives from FEMA, FMCSA, DOTs (PA, Florida, Virginia & Wisconsin), several trucking groups, hazardous carriers & some others I have left out. I believe there are 23 members on the group.

Our first meeting was Monday, January 9th, at the US DOT building. It was interesting & challenging to say the least. The discussion was brisk, full of “war stories” & you could quickly see a rift emerging between State DOTs & everybody else. At any rate, by the time the day ended, we had the beginnings of a plan.

While I believe some of our discussion may exceed the purpose of our establishment, it was productive & was leading to solving “problems” that exist when mutual aid, of any kind, flows from one jurisdiction to another.

To that end, we have sub-divided our duties into the following categories:

 A. Vehicles

 1. Legal Trucks: vehicles & trailers that are of legal size & weight, but have difficulties because the trucks are crossing multiple State lines. Failure to have US DOT numbers for interstate use, fuel tax stickers, stopping at weight stations, etc. We believe this could well represent 90% of the equipment.

 2. Over-size & Weight Trucks – these are the vehicles that need special permitting because of their length, width & weight.

 B. Disaster Periods

 1. Staging – problems occur because a disaster has not occurred or been declared

 2. Restoration - restoring order immediately in the aftermath of the event

 3. Recovery - public services are restored & now long range temporary measures must be put in place. FEMA trailers, construction cranes, things of that nature.

 4. Return – equipment & crews returning after any of the above mentioned periods.

 C. Scope of Disaster

 1. Large multi-state events - these are lead stories on the news

 2. Small intra-State events – tornados would be best example.

**WHAT I NEED FROM YOU!!!!!**

**INPUT!!!!!**

Please let me know issues Coop crews have encountered while traveling between states while providing emergency assistance. Have you encountered fuel sticker problems, weight station issues, toll roads or any other issues?

If you believe a certain route should be designated, please let me know.

If you have any other questions, concerns, grips or solutions, please feel free to share them with me.

If you have systems that have had problems or issues, please have them call me to discuss.

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Thanks for your help.

Michael