

Cross Border Regional Truck Transportation Conference Report

A First Step to Improving Regional Economic Competitiveness

**Ramada Plaza Suites
Fargo, North Dakota
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North Dakota Department of Transportation
Bismarck, North Dakota

Director
David A. Sprynczynatyk, P.E.

Acting Director
Planning & Programming Division
Bob Fode

Introduction

On June 15 and 16, 2005 the North Dakota Department of Transportation and the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute co-hosted a conference that examined opportunities for greater uniformity of truck size and weight regulations and permitting in the northern Great Plains. The conference held in Fargo, North Dakota attracted seventy people from six states and two Canadian provinces.¹ Attending the conference were representatives from state and provincial departments of transportation, state economic development departments, metropolitan planning organizations, truck regulatory agencies, chambers of commerce, motor carrier associations, and state legislatures and provincial parliaments.

The conference had four objectives. (1) Provide information on state and provincial truck size and weight regulations, and identify commonalities and differences, (2) Identify opportunities for states and provinces to work towards standardized trucking regulations and a uniform permitting process, (3) Initiate discussion on the concept of an interregional freight corridor system, and (4) Create an atmosphere that allows and encourages interaction, and develops long-term working relationships between the region's states and provinces.

The conference presentations provided an overview of the region's economy, commonalities and differences in state and provincial truck regulations and permitting, size and weight enforcement, truck issues, transportation factors influencing competitiveness, and truck safety. Although all of the presentations were excellent, the presentation on truck safety was particularly enlightening. The safety presentation revealed that larger trucks are much safer than was previously believed. In fact, when considering factors such as the availability of drivers, energy consumption, highway impacts and congestion, large trucks may offer advantages.² The conference used small group break out sessions to identify the economic benefits of uniform truck size and weight regulations and permitting, barriers to achieving greater uniformity, and possible strategies for overcoming the identified barriers. The information identifying economic benefits, barriers, and possible solutions developed in the small group breakout sessions is found on subsequent pages.

People attending the conference called it thought-provoking, interesting, beneficial and informative. Everyone who completed the evaluation form indicated that the conference was worthwhile and several individuals commented on timeliness of the conference. Finally, everyone agreed that developing greater uniformity of truck size and weight regulations and permitting will be difficult but necessary for the region to improve its economic competitiveness. ***The challenge that now exists for the states and provinces is to agree upon a regional strategy for achieving greater uniformity of truck size and weight regulations and permitting.***

¹ Conference attendees represented North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Montana, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

² Conference presentations may be viewed on the NDDOT website: <http://www.state.nd.us/dot/> click on Transportation Information

Barriers To Achieving Uniform Truck Size And Weight Regulations

1. Getting agreement amongst numerous jurisdictions on a common set of truck size and weight regulations (retaining sovereignty, local turf issues, etc.)
2. Existing trucking industry equipment is not standardized throughout the region
3. Overcoming resistance to change
4. Perceived safety and security concerns
5. Differences exist between various state and provincial highway infrastructure characteristics (different design and construction standards, desired minimum structure heights, geometrics, etc.)
6. The high cost of improving infrastructure to achieve common highway performance standards across the region
7. The high cost of maintaining infrastructure for larger trucks
8. Objections from organized labor (possible job losses associated with LCV's and greater payloads)
9. The lack of, and availability of, information on the economic benefits of greater truck size and weight uniformity
10. Opposition from the railroad and waterway industries
11. The difficulty of convening a multi-discipline regional working group to develop uniform truck size and weight regulations
12. A shortage of resources to implement uniform truck size and weight regulations
13. Differences between US and Canadian bridge formulas
14. A lack of compatibility between the information management systems of different jurisdictions (data discrepancies)
15. Differences between federal, state, provincial, and local truck size and weight regulations
16. Potential adverse environmental impacts of larger trucks
17. Driver issues (availability of training, experience, lifestyle, etc.)
18. Deciding who will pay for changes (administrative and infrastructure - fleet changes will be determined by the marketplace)
19. Differences in how various jurisdictions enforce truck size and weight regulations
20. Seasonal load restrictions variations from one jurisdiction to another
21. Accommodating specialized equipment (movement of special commodities, exempt freight, and non-divisible loads)
22. Overcoming the objections of smaller trucking firms
23. There is no common definition of a divisible load

Barriers To Achieving Uniform Permitting

1. Permitting processes differ from state to state, province to province, and states to provinces
2. Perceived jurisdictional ownership of permitting processes and potential revenue loss
3. Permitting processes within individual states vary
4. Developing the political will throughout the region to adopt a uniform permitting process

5. Resistance to change
6. Multiple permitting technologies are used throughout the region (difficulty of sharing information, different levels of technology, acceptance, availability, software packages, communication, etc.)
7. Smaller carriers have more difficulty accessing permitting technology
8. Special truck configurations are allowed in some jurisdictions and not in others
9. Permit processes must be able to conduct complex financial transactions
10. Large permit brokers maybe opposed to more uniform permitting
11. Obtaining agreement on, and adopting a common permitting system (cost/benefits, common database, cost effectiveness, liability, legal issues with one state permitting for another, etc.)
12. A lack of leadership (identifying a leader to champion uniform permitting in the region)
13. Accounting for Homeland Security issues in a cross border permitting process

Benefits To Achieving Uniformity Of Truck Size And Weight Regulations And Permitting

1. Energy savings – larger loads use proportionately less fuel to move more freight
2. Reduced transportation costs to the trucking industry (allowing LCV's and larger payloads, economies of scale, lower unit costs and shipper efficiencies, more balanced freight movements, time savings, etc.)
3. Reduced administrative costs (one-stop shopping, reciprocity between states, fewer permits, improved scheduling of loads, sharing resources amongst jurisdictions, reduced political pressure, time savings, easier routing, application of technology)
4. Improved safety - allowing LCV's and larger payloads will result in fewer trucks and less truck/automobile exposure (safety statistics do not indicate that larger trucks are less safe)
5. Proper axle numbers and spacing will reduce pavement damage
6. Better utilization of existing infrastructure and other modes will result in reduced wear and tear on infrastructure, improved forecasting of traffic, easier to design roads & bridges, lends to development of regional truck freight system, presents opportunity for truck trip planning
7. Uniformity of laws and enforcement between states and provinces in the region will result in less confusion and improved coordination
8. Equipment uniformity (no reconfiguring at state or national border, reduced equipment cost, etc.)
9. Seamless freight movement resulting in more timely deliveries and efficiency
10. Reduced emissions and negative environmental impacts
11. Fewer trucks on the road
12. Fewer illegal movements
13. Region is more economically competitive (fewer barriers to trade, levels the playing field, results in international customer development, new market opportunities, etc.)
14. Simplifies driver training

15. Enhanced competition (truck and rail)
16. Reduced congestion at borders (state/state and state/province)
17. More consistent data
18. Fewer disputes between federal and state officials – less time spent resolving issues

Potential Strategies to Overcome Barriers

Barrier 1 - Individual States and Provinces Wanting to Maintain Jurisdiction of Truck Size and Weight Regulations

Strategy: Identify champions in each state and provincial department of transportation to participate in the process of developing uniform truck size weight regulations and permitting

Difficulty: High

Time: 5 plus years

Cost: Moderate

Benefits: High

- Greater uniformity of size and weight regulations and permitting across the region
- Reduced shipping costs
- Fewer infractions
- Easy access to permitting process

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- High cost for infrastructure improvements
- Step Process
 - Infrastructure improvements
 - Standardized equipment
 - Centralize permitting
 - Educate public of benefits, safety, and cost savings
 - Change federal regulations

Lead: State and provincials DOTs

Barrier 2 – Fear of Changing the Status Quo

Strategy: Create constituent groups in the states and provinces to champion the process

Difficulty: Low

Time: 3 to 5 years

Cost: Low

Benefits: High

- Constituency created to carry out education process
- Reach a broad cross section of constituents
- Identify costs of status quo to industry

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Involve industry (shippers, motor carriers, users, etc.)
- Political involvement (high level Governor, Premier, legislature/parliament)
- Involve state and provincial agencies (transportation, agriculture and economic development)

Lead: Transportation Centers at universities in US and Canada

Barrier 3 – Increased Infrastructure Costs (roads and bridges)

Strategy: Develop new and innovative funding mechanisms

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 3 to 5 years

Cost: Low

Benefits: High

- Highway costs borne by user
- Quick infrastructure response to investment
- Reliable infrastructure supporting business development

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Charge directly for use of highways
- The political reality is that highway infrastructure improvements are expensive
- DOT and industry leaders must work together to develop an array of funding proposals for consideration by state legislatures and provincial parliaments

Lead: Coalition of state and provincial DOTs and industry leaders

Barrier 4 – The Public’s Perception of Larger Trucks

Strategy: Develop media campaign stressing the safety of large trucks based on factual data

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 3 to 5 Years

Cost: Moderate

Benefits: High

- Improved environment
- Improve economy
- Improved highway safety
- Better informed public

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

None offered

Lead: Motor Carrier Industry and state agencies

Barrier 5 – Costs to Trucking Companies to Convert Their Equipment/Fleet

Strategy: Allow the market to drive changes and provide incentives

Difficulty: Low

Time: 5 plus years
Cost: Low
Benefits: High

- Economy of scale
- Industry controlled
- Fewer trucks on highways
- Less fuel consumed
- Producers are more competitive

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Allowable configurations must be determined
- Economic study needed

Lead: Trucking Industry in response to the market

Barrier 6 – Federal Laws (Grandfather Clause, LCV Freeze, etc.)

Strategy: Reactivate NAFTA principals for truck size and weight
Difficulty: Moderate
Time: 5 plus Years
Cost: Moderate
Benefits: High

- Established opportunity for common truck size and weight

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- NAFTA principles provide a phased approach to achieving common truck size and weight
- Adopting NAFTA approach would result in harmonization
- Seven states and three provinces could serve as a pilot region for applying NAFTA truck size and weight principles
- DOTs and state legislatures reach common goal - build coalition take to Feds – build a case for policy analysis – engage and involve trucking associations as champions and supporters
- Reciprocity agreement on grandfathered limits across the region

Lead: Initially the region’s states and provinces

Barrier 7 – Changing State and Provincial Laws Pertaining to Truck Size and Weight

Strategy: Develop a coalition to define what truck size and weight laws need to be changed and to act as a lobbying group
Difficulty: High
Time: 5 plus years
Cost: Low
Benefits: High

- Developing consensus and consistency in getting legislation passed
- Inform the public (reduced costs, improve efficiencies, etc.)

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Identify key legislative leaders and policy makers to sponsor change
- Work with legislative champions in states and provinces

- Agree on legislative changes that are needed
- Educate and inform the public on the benefits of uniform truck size and weights and uniform permitting (reduced costs, improved efficiencies, competitiveness, etc.)
- Define what we need to change (where are we going?)

Lead: A regional organization like Northern Great Plains Inc, or a consortium of state and provincial DOTs

Barrier 8 – Developing a Common Regional Set of Size and Weight Regulations

Strategy: Conduct a pool fund study to analyze the benefits and costs of harmonizing truck size and weight regulations in the region

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 5 plus years

Cost: Low

Benefits: High

- Expedited movement of freight
- Lower truck transportation costs
- Improved business environment
- Economic development corridor

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Identify a champion
- Develop a pilot project
- Develop a regional compact
- Get user involvement to identify benefits
- Leverage benefits of NAFTA etc.

Lead: State and provincial DOTs, organizations such as WASHTO

Barrier 9 – Developing a Common Set of Engineering Standards

Strategy: Conduct an outreach session with the motor carrier industry to determine the region’s most common future truck configurations and corresponding highway geometric standards

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 3 to 5 Years

Cost: Moderate

Benefits: High

- Better accommodate the trucking industry’s needs
- Better connect businesses within the region
- Improved global competitiveness of businesses within the region

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Intelligent Transportation System applications may be used to improve truck flows and reduce or eliminate bottlenecks such as weigh stations
- Will require private sector support and investment

Lead: FHWA, AASHTO, CTA, ATA, ITE, Unions

Barrier 10 – The Public does not Recognize the Benefits of Larger Trucks

Strategy: Develop a public relations campaign defining the public benefits of larger trucks

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 3 to 5 Years

Cost: Moderate

Benefits: High

- A more informed public
- Public acceptance of larger trucks

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Conduct a regional study of public perception and identification of key points
- Accomplish through a pool fund study
- Hire a public relations firm to design and develop PR campaign

Lead: State and provincial motor carrier associations with assistance from university transportation centers

Barrier 11 –Seasonal Load Restrictions are applied differently across the region.

Strategy: Develop links between state, provincial, and local information sources on seasonal load restrictions

Difficulty: Low

Time: 1 to 2 Years

Cost: Low

Benefits: Moderate

- Improve the region wide exchange of information on load restriction

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Generally more of an issue with intrastate movements
- Identify cross jurisdictional zones where consistent policies can be developed
- Use pool study funding to identify bottlenecks and possible solutions

Lead: University transportation institutes with assistance from state and provincial DOTs

Barrier 12 – Shortage of Qualified Drivers for LCVs

Strategy: Promote the trucking profession through training and recertification

Difficulty: Low

Time: 1 to 2 Years

Cost: Low

Benefits: High

- More qualified drivers
- Drivers qualified to drive LCVs sooner
- Higher driver retention rates
- Better maintenance of equipment
- Safer drivers

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Develop training through the education departments of universities, trade schools, and industry programs
- Develop certification/recertification process

Lead: State Trucking Associations and private trucking firms

Barrier 13 – Creating the Political Will and Leadership Necessary to Change Truck Size and Weight Regulations

No strategies were developed for this barrier. Two groups doubled up and developed strategies for Barrier18.

Barrier 14 – Cross Border Concerns

Strategy: Hold a regional cross border meeting of state and provincial DOTs to begin the development of a common permitting process

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 3 to 5 Years

Cost: Low

Benefits: High

- Reduced administrative costs
- Time savings

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Use pool fund study approach
- Establish a demonstration project
- Consider developing agreements that will allow cross deputizing of truck size and weight enforcement personnel (state to state, province to province, and state to province)

Lead: State or provincial DOTs

Barrier 15 – Differences Exist Between State and Provincial Truck Permitting Processes

Strategy: Develop a regional process for issuing truck permits (hazmat, size and weight, routing, etc.)

Difficulty: High

Time: 3 to 5 Years

Cost: Low

Benefits: High

- One-stop shopping for permits
- More efficient freight movements
- Consistent routing

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Use the Western Regional Permitting Model

Lead: State and Provincials DOTs

Barrier 16 - Developing a Common Definition of Divisible Loads)

- Strategy:** Use a regional approach to develop standardized definition (review definitions – AASHTO, WASHTO, FHWA, trucking associations, states/provinces, others)
- Difficulty:** Moderate
- Time:** 3 to 5 Years
- Cost:** Low
- Benefits:** Moderate
- Easier for motor carriers to understand
 - Easier for regulatory agencies
 - Lower barriers to trade
- Additional Comments/Suggestions:**
- Review previous work already completed on definitions
 - Involve various agencies (AASHTO, WASHTO, FHWA, FMCSA, state motor carriers associations, provinces, trucking industry representatives)
- Lead:** University transportation center

Barrier 17 – Defining and Creating a Regional Truck Freight Transportation System

- Strategy:** Identify and develop criteria for defining and creating a regional truck freight system
- Difficulty:** High
- Time:** 3 to 5 years
- Cost:** High
- Benefits:** High
- Consistent criteria for developing a regional truck freight transportation system
 - System continuity across the region
 - Consistency of design, operation, and maintenance of a regional truck freight transportation system
- Additional Comments/Suggestions:**
- Get early successes
 - Working group from states and provinces to identify corridors, needs and consensus
 - Hire consultant to develop corridor criteria (design and maintenance standards)
 - Need uniformity from states and provinces along proposed corridors
 - Use consistent criteria to ensure continuity
 - Use a phased in approach to identify consensus on obvious routes, weights and configurations
 - Convene regional Premier and Governor Council (assign priority status – provide resources)
 - Employ a multi-phase approach – education and information on benefits
 - Educate and inform people on the benefits of change

Lead: Coalition of state and provincial DOTs and representatives from the trucking industry

Barrier 18 – Limited Resources to Bring About Uniform Truck Size and Weight Regulations and Permitting

Strategy: Develop an education and marketing campaign aimed at political leaders and stakeholders

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 3 to 5 years

Cost: Low

Benefits: High

- Involving leaders from different fields will make process move forward

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Make economic and safety issues are addressed – public, industry representatives, business leaders, etc.
- Marketing important

Lead: Trucking industry, state motor carrier associations

Barrier 18 – Limited Resources to Bring about Uniform Truck Size and Weight Regulations and Permitting

Strategy: Prioritize the actions needed to achieve size, weight and permitting uniformity.

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 5+ Years

Cost: Moderate

Benefits: High

- A more efficient transportation system
- Route continuity between states and provinces
- Safer system
- Equipment benefits
- Lower truck maintenance costs
- Lower fuel costs
- Prioritizing system will reduce highway versus upgrading the entire system

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Prioritize roadway system and develop uniform regional classification system
- Identify new sources of funding

Lead: State and provincial DOTs

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES:

Barrier #1 - Individual States and Provinces Wanting to Maintain Jurisdiction of Size and Weight Regulations

Strategies

1. Organize a regional task force of champions to overcome objections
2. Begin by allowing reciprocity in the region, and then expand beyond
3. Form a regional committee to determine best practices and share results
4. Seek changes federal regulations to allow uniformity
5. Form a regional committee to develop a standardized form for permitting
6. Inform political leadership of the benefits
7. Initiate process within the region to coordinate highway infrastructure investment also share data on regional freight movement

Benefits

1. Faster, more efficient movement of goods, less paper work and fewer infractions
2. Cost savings
3. Communication and cooperation among jurisdictions
4. Will allow truckers to use uniform permit – less mistakes and more consistent data across jurisdictional lines
5. Permit uniformity will make enforcement and compliance more consistent
6. Increased regional economic competitiveness
7. Easier for the trucking industry to comply with laws
8. Products would flow from points A to B more smoothly

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Most difficult of all the barriers to accomplish
2. May not be feasible from the federal perspective
3. Need to begin discussion and cooperation among the various jurisdictions
4. It will be a long drawn out process. Working with all the governmental units and getting agreement will take time and money.

Barrier #2 - Fear of Changing the Status Quo

Strategies

1. Develop a regional premiers/governors council to provide direction and high level political priority for the initiative
2. Develop and distribute informational material on what non uniform regulations cost the regional economy
3. Use the Alberta study to show the safety results, reduced ESAL impacts and fuel savings
4. Enact a pilot program to convince the public and government agencies
5. Identify key groups and identify champions – work with champions to develop strategies and action plans for communicating with their constituencies.
6. Use a consortium of universities working on the project jointly as a means to effect change.

Benefits

1. Strategy #1 creates political buy-in and provides leadership
2. Lends credibility to the initiative
3. Changing status quo will result in less traffic – regulatory be able to perform more enforcement
4. Energy savings
5. Savings to carriers by moving more freight with fewer drivers

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Create steering committee with representatives from all jurisdictions – format similar to Security Prosperity Partnership could be employed
2. Membership fees could fund initial activity
3. Must get public agencies on board
4. A communication/education program is needed to make sure that frequently asked questions, concerns and misinformation are dealt with promptly and consistently.
5. The educational materials would easy to produce especially considering all the work that has already been done.

Barrier #3 - Increased Infrastructure Costs**Strategies**

1. Special load permits related to actual highway damage –pricing permits to limit and recover infrastructure costs
2. Different funding mechanisms designed to help trucks
3. Sustainable funding sources other than fuel tax – mileage based
4. One-time bonding to get the system up and running
5. Manage change in size and weight to keep costs down
6. Evaluate federal subsidies to transportation
7. Sales tax on vehicle dedicated to infrastructure
8. Wheel tax
9. Privatization of government agency services
10. Coordination amongst jurisdictions at all government levels
11. Route pricing
12. Electronic registration and transactions
13. Integrate specific highway projects into the infrastructure planning process
14. Conduct a study to determine which size and weight regulations would be best based on economic benefit and cost to implement – follow up with education campaign.
15. Identify and promote preferred vehicle configurations that minimize infrastructure damage (use tax incentives)
16. Employee innovative funding mechanisms that will be sustainable for the future (i.e. one time bonding to bring the system up to par)

Benefits

None offered

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. With sustained long-term funding it will be possible to maintain the system at a higher level of operation (perhaps 12 ton).

2. Cost sharing can include other benefiting jurisdictions such as townships, cities and counties.

Barrier #4 – The Public’s Perception of Larger Trucks

Strategies

1. Develop marketing plan to improve the public’s safety perception of large trucks
2. Develop public service announcements (benefits environment, economy, safety, etc.)
3. Educate and inform DOTs, Engineers, etc.)
4. Train drivers to be less intimidating and more courteous
5. Develop displays that could be shown at events
6. Develop information on best practices that make trucking safer
7. Strictly enforce laws
8. Analyze truck safety statistics in states with good safety records – what works and what doesn’t – and transfer knowledge

Benefits

1. Safer, less intimidating trucks
2. Better trained and safer drivers
3. Reduced number of crashes
4. Improved public perception

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. It will always be difficult to change the public’s image of large trucks.
2. The public’s perception may not be that important, the perception that counts is that of the legislative bodies

Barrier #5 - Costs to Trucking Companies to Convert Their Equipment/Fleet

Strategies

1. Phase in any approach to development of standardized equipment
2. Provide incentives for companies to phase out old equipment and replace with new equipment

Benefits

1. Standardization of regulations and enforcement
2. Better shipping rates
3. Higher truck payloads (weight and cubing)
4. Regional economy more competitive
5. Companies will only incur costs as they replace equipment
6. Standardization of the truck fleet could result in more consistent highway design
7. Standardized trailer for hauling freight
8. Better resale of equipment
9. Shippers could standardize the size of pallets and shipping containers

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Government incentives (although not necessary) could encourage trucking companies to convert their fleet

2. Allow old trailers a 20-year “grandfather clause” before they would need to be replaced

Barrier #6 - Changing Federal Law (i.e. Grandfather Clause, LXV Freeze, etc.)

Strategies

1. Work with the region’s congressional delegation to introduce changes to federal law
2. Develop a proposal to allow a regional compact or pilot program
3. Develop a coalition of state and provincial DOTs – reach consensus on size and weight regulations – take consensus to federal governments
4. Adopt the NFATA truck size and weight regulations

Benefits

1. Uniform truck size and weight regulations
2. Long term economic benefits for the region
3. Removes confusion when moving freight between states

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Adopting the NAFTA truck size and weight regulations would require strong political leadership
2. Requires strong political leadership and stakeholder support
3. If you can get the state trucking associations to agree on the need they could be the conduit trying to effect change at the federal level
4. Need a crusader and focal point
5. May be more difficult to develop an agreement among the regional members than selling it to Congress
6. It may be best to start with a smaller group (2 or 3 jurisdictions) on roads under their control
7. A comprehensive engineering and economic study would probably be required
8. Must get a majority of the region’s congressional delegation on board to be successful

Barrier #7 - Changing State and Provincial Laws Pertaining to Truck Size and Weight

Strategies

1. Use regional premiers/governors council to work with legislative champions in each state and provincial parliament/legislature to change laws
2. Define GVW in the region by a defined maximum vehicle length and the proper spacing of axles rather than on axle weights.

Benefits

1. Legislators and members of provincial parliaments are being informed and educated as the process proceeds
2. Strategy #2 would give the region a uniform set of size and weight regulations
3. Reduced confusion in trucking industry

4. More consistency of enforcement and compliance

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. It will be easier to bring about uniform permitting than bring about uniform truck size and weight regulations
2. Developing a coalition in each state or province will be the key to effecting change
3. A regional working group (FHWA, RTAC, Universities, and DOTs) would need to be created to develop the criteria for Strategy #2
4. The process will take time since government moves slowly

Barrier #8 – Developing a Common Set of Size and Weight Regulations

Strategies

1. NAFTA weights and measures Task Force regional specific
2. Pilot route and involve all entities – research and effects on users
3. Regional compact to quantify changes needed
4. Cost/benefit analysis to quantify economic impacts
5. Identify groups to champion cause
6. Create a pilot project (routes) with a sunset

Benefits

1. Legislative decisions could be made based on identified benefits
2. Invites discussion, ideas and innovation
3. Facilitates trade
4. A clearly defined set of benefits

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Need to quantify the costs and benefits of harmonization
2. Limiting factors include infrastructure costs and safety concerns

Barrier #9 - Developing a Common Set of Engineering Standards

No additional strategies, benefits or comments and suggestions offered

Barrier #10 - The Public Does Not Recognize the Benefits of Larger Trucks

Strategies

1. Contract with PR firm to inform the public
2. Publish information on the economic benefits and safety of larger trucks – stress how larger trucks will reduce the number of trucks on the roadway, reduce congestion and costs

Benefits

1. Lower freight rates
2. The public will be better informed on the economic realities of larger trucks
3. Greater public acceptance of larger trucks
4. Potentially less truck traffic and reduced congestion
5. Lower cost products

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Form regional team to lead and evaluate
2. Contract with a PR firm
3. Actively include law makers in developing and selling idea
4. Base campaign on economic facts

Barrier #11 - Seasonal Load Restrictions are applied differently across the region.

Strategies

1. Maintain seasonal load restrictions but eliminate complex procedures – develop links between state and provincial websites or single website for the region
2. Establish cross jurisdictional climatic zones which can be used to establish consistent standards for seasonal load restrictions
3. Centralized analysis and evaluation of spring thaw dates (historical analysis of seasonal restrictions and publication of information)
4. Coordination of seasonal load restriction information on truck freight corridors

Benefits

1. Consistent application of policies across the region
2. Reduced barriers to trade
3. Easier for trucking industry to do business if policies are uniform
4. Reduces confusion for truckers
5. Will save time and money for truckers
6. Greater efficiency will result in fewer truck loads

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Will require some additional study
2. One web site could show all seasonal load restrictions for the entire region
3. Seasonal load restrictions are usually not a significant barrier to interstate freight movements

Barrier #12 – Shortage of Qualified Drivers for LCVs

Strategies

1. Work with community colleges and technical colleges to develop training programs
2. Develop incentive program for trucking firms to provide year round training to drivers

Benefits

None offered

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Not a state or provincial government issue, the private sector should be responsible for this issue

Barrier #13 – Creating the Political Will and Leadership Necessary to Change Truck Size and Weight Regulations

Strategies

1. Develop political champions (congressional members, governors, premiers)
2. Education of selected officials versus lobbyists
3. Reduce political risk
4. Educate the public on safety and benefits
5. Use regional authority established via governors, Northern Great Plains Authority to develop political clout necessary to change truck size and weight regulations
6. Private industry leaders meet with political leadership
7. Consistent message from constituencies
8. Convene state and provincial DOTs to identify common goals and objectives – develop package that can be delivered to each legislative body

Benefits

1. Unified position and voice in legislative process
2. Greatly improves the chance that changes will be made

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Deal with issue through regional authority (Northern Great Plains Regional Authority)
2. Include trucking industry and shippers at the table
3. Inform and educate elected officials
4. Use existing structures such as state freight advisory committees

Barrier #14 - Cross Border Concerns

Strategies

1. After convening a meeting to identify the concerns, initiate a cross border pilot permitting project with a sunset clause – analyze pilot project results and make recommendations for permanent cross border permitting

Benefits

1. Standardization of size and weight regulations will ease the movement of freight at the borders
2. Developing solutions through a regional focus will create more “togetherness” and be less threatening
3. Would be of great benefit to cross freight movement and improve trade

Additional Comments/Suggestions

None offered

Barrier #15 - Differences Exist Between State and Provincial Truck Permitting Processes

Strategies

1. Get state and provincial DOT directors to agree in principal to work toward a uniform process – establish a working group to identify an envelope vehicle

Benefits

1. “One-stop shopping”
2. Easy to issue permits and determine allowable loads
3. Easier for trucking companies to be compliance

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Follow the Western Regional Permit model
2. Geographical/topological differences in the region may dictate what loads are allowed on what routes
3. Common permitting agency needs access to all information in the region
4. A common permitting system will allow for greater ease in data sharing

Barrier #16 - Developing a Common Definition of Divisible Loads

Strategies

1. Use the university transportation programs to review the region’s definitions of divisible loads and propose a common definition. This also includes identifying the necessary legislative and administratively steps to adopting a common definition.

Benefits

1. Would reduce trade barriers
2. Easier for trucking to do business in region – region is more attractive to business
3. Reduced confusion through more consistent regulation
4. A common definition will make administration easier

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Establish working group of DOT and regulatory agency employees to develop a recommended definition of a divisible load
2. Contract with a university to analyze existing state and provincial definitions (within the region) of a divisible load and develop a proposed definition
3. If it’s easily divided then it’s a divisible load

Barrier #17 - Defining and Creating a Regional Truck Freight Transportation System

Strategies

1. Conduct a regional pool fund study (hire consultant) to define criteria for a regional truck freight transportation corridor system
2. Have each state and province in the region define which routes can currently handle LCV’s and larger trucks – analyze gaps and potentials

3. Create a regional working group of DOT employees to identify a regional truck freight transportation network – develop common criteria and apply to region

Benefits

1. The seamless transportation of goods within the region on high quality, safe, well-maintained, low congested roads
2. A uniform truck transportation (consistent engineering standards and characteristics) will result in a safer system overall
3. Involving the various regional jurisdictions will generate buy-in

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. Look for similar characteristics for defining the system
2. Each state and province will need to identify their own unique truck transportation freight needs
3. One option would be to designate a small number of corridors as a pilot project
4. Using a consultant to lead the process will help eliminate individual state biases
5. Celebrate early “wins” to help keep the process going
6. Get a general, broad commitment to the idea before proceeding
7. Identify easy wins and use phased in approach so the easy wins can be obtained and generate momentum for the process

Barrier #18 - Limited Resources to Bring About Uniform Size, Weight and Permitting

Strategies

1. Prioritize roadway systems and coax trucks to roadways best suited to traffic – recognize that not all roadways are built to the same standards

Benefits

1. Improved road system
2. Cost savings

Additional Comments/Suggestions

1. This a problem that will always be with us
2. Funding or a lack of funding is continuous
3. Must prioritize

**Conference Evaluation
On Scale of 1 to 5**

Speakers - Average 4.4

Comments: Good information, good variety, great, very organized, all speakers were well founded and timely, what a new approach to regional problem, the speakers were very knowledgeable and entertaining, provided good background and education of issues

Break Out Sessions - Average 4.4

Comments: Approach to identifying benefits, barriers and strategies worked well, good, good time allocation, good discussion with goals in mind, good cross section of people, lots of variety yet much consensus within our group

Accommodations

Conference Facility - Average 4.0

Meals - Average 4.7

Hotel/Rooms - Average 4.3

Was this conference of benefit to you? 15-Yes 0-No

Comments: Always good to meet others and see what the differences and similarities are, info session of great value, working group sessions – good discussion and mix of perspectives, as an MPO I'm a very small piece of the puzzle, good networking, thought provoking, interesting to see that changes are wanted to be made, understand that bigger can be better if done right, very beneficial and informative, input from large area, finding problems in other areas, huge undertaking-not impossible to come an agreement region wide but it will take time, it helped me develop an understanding of the issues and problems, to share various views from different groups, great first step, it certainly was, MN is starting a truck size and weight evaluation study and this conference was very timely for me, we do mostly containers going to Canada so as far as long loads does not apply

Would you attend a follow up conference? 16-Yes 2-No

Comments: Would probably need to demonstrate value from this conference and a plan to move forward, not sure, this process to be successful must continue, what is the economic benefit, another conference would be OK in the future after we go back to our state and get a feel for their approach to this transportation problem, need to continue process, I would, not at this time

Other comments/recommendations

Comments: Excellent job, good show, good ideas – implementation is the challenge, overall the conference is well organized, well run conference – congratulations, we have a long road ahead of ourselves - lots of work and money