



FEDERAL HIGHWAY  
ADMINISTRATION  
TEXAS DIVISION

# State of Texas Border Partnership E-Newsletter

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## In this Month's Issue:

- Congressional Hearing on the Future Federal Role for Developing the Nation's Transportation System (p.1)
- Global Fuel Protests Continue, U.S. Drivers Drive 22 Billion Fewer Miles (p.2)
- OOIDA applies to be a partner for \$50 million EPA grant program (p.3)
- L.A. City Council approves port Clean Trucks Program (p.4)
- Proposed Rule Would Keep Trucks Off N.Y. Secondary Roads (p.4)
- Jobs at Risk if Congress Doesn't Fix the Highway Trust Fund (p.5)
- BTS Special Report on U.S.-China Trade and America's Transportation System (p.6)
- Iowa Roads and Bridges Suffer "Unimaginable Damage" From Flooding (p.6)
- National Transportation Statistics (2008) Report Available Now Through U.S. DOT BTS (p.7)

## Congressional Hearing on the Future Federal Government Role for Developing the Nation's Transportation System

On June 25, 2008, the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to examine the role the federal government has played in the development of the nation's current transportation system, and to explore the role the federal government should play in the future. Lance R. Grenzeback (a Senior Vice President of Cambridge Systematics, Inc.) gave a presentation to the Senate Committee on the "Future Role of Surface Transportation." In his remarks, he focused his remarks on freight transportation and the nation's highway system. He argued that the key federal roles in the future should be to—

- Maintain the capacity and reliability of our highway freight system;
- Reduce major highway bottlenecks to freight movement;
- Authorize new institutional arrangements to improve and operate highway networks, especially at the multistate and corridor levels; and
- Balance economic risk as the freight transportation system adjusts to changes in demand, fuels and fuels costs, carbon taxes, and greenhouse gas regulation.

Kathleen Marvaso, Vice President of Public Affairs for the American Automobile Association (AAA) recommended

that safety be one of the key focus areas for the next reauthorization. She indicated that there is a need for continued federal focus on improving the quality of transportation data.

She said during her testimony that "Without good data, we can't measure what's working, whether it's in safety, freight mobility, congestion, or other programs." Ms. Marvaso also stated that "Limited transportation dollars must be applied more effectively throughout the system by increasing the focus on testing and evaluation. We need to move towards a more performance-based, outcome-driven approach."

In order to accomplish this transformation, Ms. Marvaso testified that "we need much better data collection and analysis in order to understand if we are reaching future national and state mobility and safety goals." Others testifying included Alan Pisarski, consultant, Dr. Bruce Seely, Chair of Social Sciences at Michigan Technological University, and Dr. Samuel R. Staley, Director of the Urban Land use Policy for the Reason Foundation.

Copies of these remarks and the submitted testimony of the witnesses, as well as a video of the hearing, are available online

at: [http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?](http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAc-)

[FuseAc-tion=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing\\_ID=9d758a65-802a-23ad-49f2-5a3a5ec4aaa1](http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAc-tion=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=9d758a65-802a-23ad-49f2-5a3a5ec4aaa1)

## Global Fuel Protests Continue, U.S. Drivers Drive 22 Billion Fewer Miles

Fuel protests by truckers around the world continued on Wednesday, July 2. In India, *The Associated Press* reported, literally millions of truckers went on strike to protest rising fuel prices and rising toll road charges. The Indian government regulates fuel prices – and has raised prices by 17 percent this year. Truck drivers in India make very little compared to company drivers in the U.S. Indian truckers could literally earn the equivalent of several years of income after just driving a few months in the U.S.

The union representing nearly 5 million truckers in India wants lower diesel fuel taxes and a roll-back of toll increases. Meanwhile, in Britain, hundreds of angry truckers descended on London to demand that the government cut the price of fuel. In New Zealand, truckers plan to drive convoys into the major cities on Friday, July 4, to protest a sudden increase of up to 10 percent in road user charges ordered by the government. Within the U.S., diesel fuel's national retail pump average declined 0.3 cent to \$4.645 a gallon, the U.S. Department of Energy reported last week. The modest downturn was the fourth in five weeks, although diesel is just 7.8 cents below the record \$4.723 set on May 26.

The price is \$1.816 higher than it was a year ago, according to DOE figures. Meanwhile, gasoline rose 1.6 cents to \$4.095, a record high price for the motor fuel, leaving it \$1.136 over a year ago, DOE said. Diesel moved by less than a penny in four of five national regions, declining by 1.4 cents in the Rocky Mountain region to \$4.638. The price in California — which DOE breaks out separately from its regions but which is included in the West Coast — dipped 0.6 cent to \$4.928, the highest overall price.

The price in the New England sub-region rose 1.1 cents to \$4.822, matching the Central Atlantic sub-region for the second-highest reported price, behind California. Crude oil hit a record \$143.67 in intraday trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange Monday, following Friday's record closing price of \$140.21, Bloomberg reported. Oil closed at \$140 a barrel on the Nymex last week and Friday was the first day that oil topped the \$140 mark.

Each week, DOE surveys about 350 diesel filling stations to compile a national snapshot average price. Americans drove 22 billion fewer miles from November through April than during the same period in 2006-07, the biggest such drop since the Iranian revolution led to gasoline supply shortages in 1979-80.

The numbers released last month may reflect more than a temporary attitude change in consumers toward high gas prices, Transportation Secretary Mary Peters said. Previously, she said, "people might change their pattern for a short period of time, but it almost always bounced back very quickly. We're not seeing that now." The decline in total miles traveled, though only 1%, means that many drivers are cutting back far more because the number of drivers and vehicles grows by 1% to 2% a year. Americans are driving about the same number of miles as in 2005, when the USA had 8 million fewer people, according to a USA TODAY analysis of Federal Highway Administration data. The declines are sharpest on rural roads, indicating that people are cutting back on long-distance and vacation trips. Among potential impacts of Americans driving less:

- Drivers might notice "some reduction" in traffic congestion, said Tim Lomax of the Texas Transportation Institute. "But over several months, the typical commuter will adjust their driving patterns";
- Housing patterns could change as more people buy houses closer to work or find jobs closer to home, Lomax said.
- A shift in the way the nation pays for roads, bridges and transit. As people drive less, the federal Highway Trust Fund — derived from gasoline and diesel taxes — is receiving billions less, Peters said. She's promoting tolling and making drivers pay more during peak hours.

For additional information, please see: [http:// www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-06-19-drivingless\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-06-19-drivingless_N.htm)

## OOIDA applies to be a partner for \$50 million EPA grant program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is focusing on small trucking operations for its new \$50 million emissions reduction program, and the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) hopes to be one of several groups that will receive some of the grant money. On April 2, the EPA announced it will provide nearly \$50 million in grants through the National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program – a program authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The program is set up to fund the purchase of engine replacements, retrofits, and anti-idling devices such as auxiliary power units (APUs).

So far, OOIDA has applied to administer \$2 million under the nationwide program and is submitting additional proposals for regional grant funds. OOIDA applied due to the Association's knowledge of small businesses and particularly the needs of one-man, one-truck, long-haul operations, said Tom Weakley, director of operations for the OOIDA Foundation. "Obviously, there are more and more idling restrictions being enforced," Weakley said. "If we can get money to compensate some of the guys who can't afford or are struggling to afford APUs and other devices, it will help them reduce fuel use and to meet greenhouse gas emission standards. That would be good for them and could possibly help save them from getting fines."

The Association currently provides low-interest loans for engine retrofit and anti-idling devices and has a unique knowledge of truck purchase laws for different U.S. states, Weakley said. If the Association is awarded administration of the funds, OOIDA leaders plan to rebate small business truckers approximately 40 percent of the purchase price of APUs, engine replacements, retrofits, and other devices that cut diesel emissions. "There's no guarantee we'll get

that grant," said Weakley. "We've made the application and we think we have an excellent shot at it. Obviously, I'm biased, but I think we meet the criteria they put forth. We have a database by which we can locate small businesses, and because the one we applied for is a national grant, we're uniquely positioned to identify small businesses in the 48 contiguous states." The EPA has increasingly focused on the needs of small business truckers in recent years, Weakley said, and OOIDA has made a point of participating in focus groups to describe how small trucking companies operate. "They've taken an active interest and have listened," Weakley said. "They know the majority of trucks on the road are small businesses trying to make a living, and they are the ones least likely to be able to afford it. That's the group they want to reach."

OOIDA recently became an Associate Member of the EPA's Smartway program – a voluntary partnership between transportation industry representatives and the EPA to reduce diesel emissions. In its application to the EPA National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program, OOIDA said it will collect idling information and other data from small businesses before they obtain emission reduction and anti-idling devices and after such devices are installed.

Eventually, the Association would have calculations showing the total reduction of emissions that result from the grant program. EPA officials plan to announce selections for grant administrators before the fall, Weakley said. Individual OOIDA members will be hearing from the Association if grant money is received, and the Association also would make a public announcement. For additional information, please see: [http://www.landlinemag.com/todays\\_news/Daily/2008/](http://www.landlinemag.com/todays_news/Daily/2008/)

## L.A. City Council approves port Clean Trucks Program

The Los Angeles City Council approved a plan recently to require all short-haul truck drivers entering the Port of Los Angeles to be employees of licensed motor carriers by late 2013. The plan is part of the port's Clean Trucks Program, which is designed to reduce diesel emissions at the port by 80 percent within five years. The plan also bans trucks built before 1989 from the ports beginning Oct. 1, 2008.

OOIDA has worked closely with the port on its emissions regulation, and is working to develop a day-pass system that long haulers can use for occasional port visits. Joe Rajkovic, regulatory affairs specialist for OOIDA, said the Association supports the Clean Trucks Program because it will ultimately lead to improvements for drayage drivers at the ports. Not everyone feels that way. The American Trucking Association has said it will file a lawsuit in an effort to stop the program from moving forward. While the ATA claims the city and port officials want to regulate the industry and

reduce competition by forcing companies to hire drivers as employees, Rajkovic said large motor carriers may, in fact, be more interested in the port's \$2 billion for truck purchases and engine replacements for local drayage drivers.

"The motor carrier industry talks about free markets, yet they have not repudiated taking approximately \$2 billion of port and public subsidy to make their part of the industry compliant with air quality regulations our members have to comply with without such a subsidy," Rajkovic said.

"Free-market sentiments from the motor carrier industry in California aren't very endearing to the trucker raising a family in Nebraska on the same income port drivers get, yet he has to operate a compliant truck on his own dime." For additional information, please see: [http://www.landlinemag.com/todays\\_news/Daily/2008/Jun08/061608/061908-04.htm](http://www.landlinemag.com/todays_news/Daily/2008/Jun08/061608/061908-04.htm)

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## Proposed Rule Would Keep Trucks Off N.Y. Secondary Roads

The State of New York is considering a policy that would keep large trucks on interstate highways only, except to access terminals or to reach food, fuel, rest or repair locations.

The New York State Department of Transportation issued guidelines on the policy following Gov. David Patterson's (D) announcement last week on the new regulations.

"When travelling off the national network, large trucks should utilize the most direct route when accessing terminals and services," NYSDOT said in a statement on its Web site.

It will develop regulations for large-truck routings that will "balance the need for large trucks to serve the state's economy with the need to promote sustainable economic development, tourism and an improved quality of life," the statement said.

"This policy will reduce truck traffic in many local communities by keeping large trucks on the national network to the maximum extent practicable."

NYSDOT said it is working with officials to identify and develop appropriate traffic-calming measures at 15 proposed locations, and later this month plans to meet with businesses and the trucking industry to discuss the proposed regulation.

The Department also will be scheduling a public meeting about the regulation to seek the public's input. <http://www.ttnews.com/articles/basetemplate.aspx?storyid=19992>

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## Jobs At Risk if U.S. Congress Doesn't Fix the Highway Fund (Statements from AASHTO Executive Director- John Horsley)

Almost 400,000 American jobs are hanging in the balance awaiting action by Congress to keep guaranteed transportation funding in the pipeline.

These are good paying jobs – engineers, architects, tradesmen and other professionals in every state department of transportation in America. They include factory jobs that produce the tons of construction materials necessary to build and maintain the nation's highways and bridges.

These jobs and the transportation projects they support are in jeopardy because according to the budget submitted by President Bush in February, there is a \$3.3 billion deficit in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). If Congress fails to act, states would face a 34 percent cut in highway funding.

A proposal by U.S. Sens. Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) would close the gap in the Highway Account this year by transferring \$8 billion to the Highway Trust Fund. Last month, our AASHTO board of directors voted unanimously to support the Baucus/Grassley measure. AASHTO and other transportation advocates are reaching out to Congress to educate them about this critical issue.

Americans can ill afford to lose hundreds of thousands of jobs, when the nation's unemployment rate has grown to 5.5 percent. A recent analysis by the Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC), found that 10 states stand to lose tens of thousands of jobs. They are:

- California: 32,000 jobs
- Texas: 30,000 jobs
- New York: 20,000 jobs
- Florida: 20,000 jobs
- Pennsylvania: 19,000 jobs
- Georgia: 14,000 jobs
- Illinois: 13,000 jobs
- New Jersey: 11,000 jobs

- North Carolina: 10,000 jobs
- Ohio: 12,000 jobs.

The job impact analysis is based on Federal Highway Administration data and includes both apportioned programs and high priority projects. The analysis determined that if lawmakers fail to approve the Baucus/Grassley provision this year all 50 U.S. states would lose a total of 379, 537 jobs.

This crisis could not have come at a worse time. State DOT budgets are already being squeezed by record high fuel costs, bad weather and inflation. Illinois spent \$90 million dollars for snow and ice removal this winter, double what it typically spends. Other states have been hit hard by floods, tornadoes and hurricanes.

States are also concerned about finding the resources necessary to maintain and replace ageing infrastructure. The interstate system has more than 55,000 bridges, many of which are reaching 40 to 50 years of age. Bridges and other structures this old usually require substantial rehabilitation or reconstruction. As we go out another 20 to 30 years, they will require complete replacement.

Cash strapped states are being forced to find new ways to pay for this critical need. For example Pennsylvania's legislature is being asked to consider a proposal to borrow \$200 million a year for three years to be combined with federal road-repair funds to address that state's transportation infrastructure needs. Pennsylvania is not alone. A thorough assessment of the current rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of our national Interstate Highway system must be done as soon as possible. There is no time to waste. For additional information, please see the following website: <http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=317705>

## BTS Special Report on U.S.-China Trade and America's Transportation System

The growth in U.S.- China trade over the last two decades has impacted the U.S. transportation system by increasing traffic at air cargo hubs and sea-ports. The highway and rail infrastructure that supports the movement of cargo to and from these facilities has also been affected. In particular, growing air trade with China in the Southwest and Great Lakes regions of the United States and the increase in water trade at west coast ports have put an even greater

demand on the transportation infrastructure serving these areas. The addition of work shifts at busy sea ports, the use of variable highway tolls to manage freight traffic, shifting trade flows among entry and exit points, and changing domestic trade routes can all be at least partly attributed to the marked increase in U.S.-China trade. Infrastructure changes will also affect the trade routes. For example, when completed several years from now, the widening of the Panama

Canal will likely facilitate a shift in trade-related traffic from congested west coast ports to less crowded ports in the Southeast. For additional information on this report, please see the following web-link: [http://www.bts.gov/publications/bts\\_special\\_report/2008\\_007/pdf/entire.pdf](http://www.bts.gov/publications/bts_special_report/2008_007/pdf/entire.pdf)

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## Iowa Roads and Bridges Suffer “Unimaginable Damage” From Flooding

As the flood waters begin to recede, the difficult job of cleaning up has begun in some of the devastated communities across the State of Iowa. State officials say there have been 17 storm related deaths since May 25 and 83 of the state's 99 counties have been declared disaster areas as a result of record floods. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) says Iowa was the hardest hit, among nine states impacted by extreme weather over the past few weeks. FEMA estimates that a total of 11 million people were impacted in the Midwest so far.

In Iowa, more than 50 U.S. highways and hundreds of smaller roads had to be closed due to the flooding. Many of the state's roads, bridges and railways suf-

fered major damage and there were significant traffic problems resulting from the temporary closure of sections of Interstate Highways 80 and 380, which connect Iowa City and Cedar Rapids. State officials described the widespread devastation as “unimaginable.”

Leading the state's response and recovery efforts for the Iowa transportation system is Iowa Department of Transportation Director Nancy J. Richardson. The Iowa Department of Transportation is posting the very latest road closure information and a comprehensive photo gallery of the devastation. You can find the information by clicking on the flood alerts banner at [http://](http://www.iowa.gov/state/main/index.html)

[www.iowa.gov/state/main/index.html](http://www.iowa.gov/state/main/index.html). To find out how to make a donation or to volunteer your time to the recovery effort visit <http://flood2008.iowa.gov>.

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Famous Quote of the Day:

“No exercise is better for the human heart than reaching down to lift up another person.”

Tim Russert, NBC  
News (1950-2008)

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Information provided is a compilation from other news and on-line media sources, any information relayed is based upon the accuracy of the information provided by other news gathering organizations and does not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Federal Highway Administration or the State of Texas Border Partnership Working Group.

## National Transportation Statistics (2008) Report Available Now Through U.S. DOT BTS

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics, a part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, has released its annual statistical report on the U.S. transportation system. The report includes information on the system's physical components, safety record, economic performance, energy use, and environmental impacts.

Compiled and published by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), *National Transportation Statistics* presents information on the U.S. transportation system, including its physical components, safety record, railroad and freight goods movements, international border crossing volumes, economic performance, energy use, and environmental impacts.

*National Transportation Statistics* is a companion document to the *Transportation Statistics Annual Report*, which analyzes some of the data presented here, and *State Transportation Statistics*, which presents state-level data on many of the same topics presented here. The report has four chapters:

- Chapter 1 provides data on the extent, condition, use, and performance of the physical transportation network.
- Chapter 2 details transportation's safety record, giving data on accidents, crashes, fatalities, and injuries for each transportation mode and hazardous materials.

- Chapter 3 focuses on the relationship between transportation and the economy, presenting data on transportation's contribution to the gross domestic product, employment by industry and occupation, and transportation-related consumer and government expenditures.
- Chapter 4 presents data on transportation energy use and transportation-related environmental impacts.
- Appendix A contains metric conversions of select tables. BTS obtained the data in this report from many sources, including federal government agencies, private industry, and associations.

Documents cited as sources for the tables provide detailed information about definitions, methodologies, and statistical reliability. Some of the data are based on samples and are subject to sampling variability. *National Transportation Statistics* is updated quarterly at [www.bts.gov](http://www.bts.gov). For additional information, please see the following web-link: [http://www.bts.gov/publications/national\\_transportation\\_statistics/pdf/](http://www.bts.gov/publications/national_transportation_statistics/pdf/)