

MEMORANDUM

To: Route 236 Implementation Committee and Interested Parties

From: Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

Date: January 19, 2006

RE: Meeting Notes from 3rd Overlimit Commercial Vehicle Meeting on
Wednesday January 11, 2006

This was the 3rd meeting organized by the Route 236 Corridor Implementation Committee and Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation Study MPO (KACTS Metropolitan Planning Organization) to resume talks between towns on Route 236/4, the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles-Motor Carrier Services, the Maine State Police and the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) regarding overdimension and overweight vehicles passing through the Route 236/4 corridor.

Those in attendance included:

Sgt. Stephen Ashcroft, Maine State Police; Karen Brown-Mohr, Manufactured Housing Association of Maine (MHAM); David Burke, South Berwick Planning Board/Route 236 Committee; Kevin Curran, Eliot Police Department; Lt. Thomas Kelly, Maine State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division; Jonathan LaBonte, Maine Turnpike Authority; George Mueller, South Berwick; Marion Glomp-Mueller, South Berwick; Trooper Robert Nichols, Maine State Police; Terry Oliver, South Berwick Public Works/KACTS/Route 236 Committee; Tom Reinauer, SMRPC/KACTS; Pat Robinson, South Berwick Traffic Committee; George Romoser, South Berwick; Rick Rossiter, Kittery Public Works Director; John Rudolph, South Berwick Transportation Committee/Route 236 Committee; Theodor Short; Eliot Police Chief/Route 236 Committee; Conrad Welzel, Maine Turnpike Authority.

Update on Action Items Since September 27, 2005 Meeting

After introductions, the meeting began with Tom Reinauer updating the group on various activities that have occurred since the September 27 meeting to discuss ways to resolve or improve issues relating to overlimit commercial vehicles on Route 236/Route 4:

- As requested, staff prepared an article to include in the Manufactured Housing Assoc. of Maine newsletter. Tom mentioned that he could send a copy to Committee members if anyone is interested. The article points out the most difficult times during the day to traverse downtown South Berwick, and asks the companies hauling overlimit vehicles to consider changing travel times if it is possible.
- Tom also passed out copies of information provided by Tim Bolton from the MaineDOT Office of Freight Transportation regarding vehicle height detection technology. The

technology is part of an overall vehicle screening plan the Department is undertaking for the Kittery-York weigh areas.

- Staff worked with Karen-Brown Mohr and distributed information from the MAHM regarding unifying standards between many of the northeast States for overlimit vehicles and routing. The report was actually prepared for the Northeast Manufactured Housing Association by Maine Tomorrow, and is entitled “A Review of Issues Related to Harmonizing Dimensional Transport Requirements in the Northeast”. Copies were distributed via email, but members were encouraged to contact staff if they still need the information.
- Crash Data:
 - Staff was asked to research truck crash data that was received from MaineDOT, and take a look specifically at crashes involving large trucks (3 or more axles). Tom Reinauer gave an overview of the report that was created by Josh Mack at SMRPC. He explained that they did not perceive any difference in the crash rates of larger vehicles when compared to the overall traffic mix in the corridor. He mentioned that it was definitely a worthy exercise, since the data gives a very good summary of the frequency and types of vehicle crashes that have occurred on Route 236.
 - Several members discussed the possibility of breaking out only the crashes involving overlimit vehicles, and taking a look at the causes – such as driver error, mechanical defect, etc. Tom stated that he believed the data on overlimit vehicles could not be broken out, but that he would double-check with Josh and MaineDOT to make sure this is the case.
 - Sgt. Ashcroft suggested contacting Greg Costello at MaineDOT, as this data should be reported electronically when local, state, or county officers send the accident reports.
 - **The Committee agreed that staff should research the data further, and break out the accidents involving overlimit vehicles (statewide) if possible.**
- Permitting Data:
 - Tom gave a brief overview of the analysis of permit data that was provided by Garry Hinkley from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. A copy of the summary is available from SMRPC.
 - § The number of overlimit vehicles passing through Route 236 in 2004 was 1,400 – or about 4% of the total statewide.
 - § By comparison, about 9,200 – or 25% were routed via the Maine Turnpike
 - § About half of the 1,400 were manufactured housing
 - § Only 6% of the overlimit vehicles had the option of taking the Turnpike instead of Route 236.
 - § There did not seem to be any difference in the level of permitting based on the seasons.
 - Conrad Welzel asked what percentage of overlimit vehicles using the turnpike were manufactured housing or something similar. Tom stated they had not looked at this, but the number should be easily acquired from the data.
 - Terry Oliver pointed out that many of the 1,400 could be construction equipment that is more local traffic

Discussion with State and Local Police regarding additional enforcement training

Tom Reinauer gave a brief overview of how this idea developed, and that it was an effort to add to the enforcement capabilities of the local police departments. The Police Chiefs in Kittery, Eliot, South Berwick, Berwick, and North Berwick have expressed interest. With the amount of truck traffic on Route 236, it would be beneficial to have additional capabilities for staff when they have pulled over a vehicle. A summary of key discussion points follows:

- Chief Short explained that he would like to be able to send one of his officers to the Level 3 training that is offered by the Massachusetts State Police. He mentioned that he does not have any intention of having officers conduct roadside vehicle inspections, but the training would allow for driver-related infractions such as log book violations.
- Lt. Kelley explained that, being new to this process, he was unclear as what the impetus for this training is and how it would fit into what is currently happening in the area for commercial vehicle enforcement.
- Tom gave a brief history of how this subcommittee formed – as a result of a larger effort from the Route 236 Corridor Committee – and that the enforcement and possible training was one piece of what this subcommittee has been discussing and working on over the past 6 months.
- Lt. Kelley explained how the system currently works, and also went over some of the issues that may arise with additional trained officers. The primary concern is quality control, but there are others, such as safety and compatibility with the current electronic reporting system. He is also concerned about challenges to violations, and how that might be handled if local police departments are involved.
- Chief Short explained that he is familiar with the processes, and that he is definitely only discussing Level 3 training. He suggested that any violation challenges from drivers or companies would still be handled the way they are now. He sees the electronic reporting to be something that would work just as well as the current accident reporting system that his officers are familiar with. He and other chiefs in the area would make sure to work with the State Police to address these and other concerns.
- Tom Reinauer suggested that Chief Short work with Lt. Kelley to iron out details and continue discussions at a later date. The Committee agreed that this was the best course of action.
- Rick Rossiter expressed his concern that the group has been spending too much time involving themselves in enforcement decisions. He does not see this as a goal of the original group and believes that the effort may just lead to additional police department staff, and more tax dollars.
- Tom explained that this was just a subcommittee of the Route 236 Corridor group, not the whole Committee. He also sees this as being the last meeting of the subcommittee, as staff believes the group has fulfilled its original tasks.
- Karen Brown-Mohr asked what percent of vehicles passing through the weigh stations had infractions. Sgt. Ashcroft explained that this was difficult to answer due to the type of inspections that are conducted on any given day. Sometimes the detail only checks for weight, so the number may be low. On other days, when they are doing vehicle

inspections, the number of infractions is much higher. There are also differences in terms of infractions and taking a vehicle out of service.

- George Romoser asked where the worst areas were for truck traffic. Trooper Nichols explained that the whole corridor has heavy truck traffic. There are also several new businesses coming into the area that will add to this volume. In terms of crashes or violations, he sees different patterns depending on the time of day. During the daytime, it is typically mechanical problems, overweight, and speeding. At night the most prevalent cause is driver behavior.
- Tom also brought up two other items the group wanted to discuss with the State Police. One is increasing the communication between local and State Police in terms of when the weigh stations are open. Lt. Kelley explained that this would probably not be very effective, as the schedule changes frequently, and there are often times when it is scheduled but they are unable to be operated due to lack of man power.
- Tom mentioned that the Committee would also like to support the increase of funding for the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division. The group realizes that there are many competing interests for State funds, but would like to write a letter as a Committee supporting such funding.

Other Business

- Conrad Welzel mentioned that there is a property owner along Route 236 who has offered property to allow truck inspections. This has been an issue in the past, as there is currently no safe area to pull over vehicles and conduct the proper inspections safely. Trooper Nichols had heard of this possibility, but was not sure if it was still a viable option. Staff will follow up with Trooper Nichols and Representative Lewan, who mentioned this at the last meeting.
- The group decided that this would be the last meeting of this subcommittee, and that further discussion updates would be handled during the ongoing Route 236 Committee meetings.