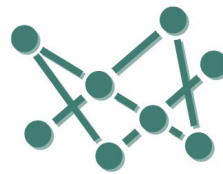


## Southeastern Corridor Council – Zoom Webinar Notes

23<sup>rd</sup> webinar – 12/17/20



# SOUTHEASTERN CORRIDOR COUNCIL

- Notes taken by Rose; edited by Overly.
- Nichols took attendance; Chat provided by Vail.
- Zoom ran 2:00 - 3:10pm ET.

### Attendees (38):

#### **CLEAN CITIES COALITIONS & FHWA/DOE-CC REPS**

AL = **Mark Bentley**, Michael Staley,

Phillip Wiedmeyer

GA = Jennifer Fundora, Frank Morris

KY = Emily Carpenter

LA = Ann Vail

NC = Chris Dobbins, Sara Nichols,

Caitlin Rose, Carina Soriano

SC = Eva James, Ben Kessler

TN = Shauna Basques, **Jonathan**

**Overly**

VA = Alleyn Harned

DOT/FHWA = Diane Turchetta, Mike

Scarpino, Stephen Costa

DOE Clean Cities = Trev Hall

*(Bold = co-chairs)*

## AGENDA

1. Review what has come out in the federal register with a comment deadline of March 15, 2021
2. Review of the process for submitting comments to the federal register. *Do all the coalitions of the SCC want to coordinate one comment letter that we all submit individually?*
3. a review of legislation congress is expected to consider in 2021 that can have a major impact.
  - a. TEP looking at this issue for their agenda
  - b. we can provide each coalition with email addresses for the appropriate congressional staff for their state if they want to reach out to educate their members of Congress about this issue.

## NOTES

### Looked at news from CT on their installation of corridor signs –

<https://portal.ct.gov/DOI/News-from-the-Connecticut-Department-of-Transportation/2020/Be-on-the-Lookout-for-Connecticuts-New-Alternative-Fuel-Corridor-Signs> (photo at right)

**SCC website** – Website is up; ETCleanFuels is making edits and adding content. Refresh data is out, maps on site reflect this; will add links to AFDC site and AFDC Station Locator. Sarah Roth with ETCleanFuels is helping with the site. We will hope to start loading more state-specific data soon.

### Current progress – Overly

- We are to the point with *Identification/Corridor* signs that each state can make its own decisions about moving forward with signage. TBD if new MUTCD work will impact that.



- *Directional* signage is major issue with new MUTCD, but states can still elect to use general service or specific service signs. Hope is that to provide maximum flexibility, all SE state DOTs will support language to allow for use of specific service.

### MUTCD update – Staley

- On Monday, DOT put notice in federal register that they're updating MUTCD, 90-day public comment period (ends 3/15/21), pretty big changes announced regarding alt fuels, most of which are the opposite of what alt-fuel advocates would like to see (too restrictive, appears to be focused on keeping gasoline and diesel at the forefront – not visionary or even thoughtful to the expansion in use of alternative fuels)
- Summary of language:
  - Term alt fuel appears 18 times
  - No fueling station logos can appear on exit signage if the station does not also sell gasoline
  - Seeks to prohibit businesses other than gas stations from putting supplemental messaging on logos (for E85, EV, etc.)
  - Appears that you must also put up general service signs in conjunction with corridor ID signage (non-starter for ALDOT - have a specific service logo program; many other states feel similarly)
  - CA MUTCD changed the word "gas" to "fuel" - manual doesn't define gas nor fuel nor alt fuel
  - Alt fuel is defined in federal code, not gas (although interpreting it a certain way)
  - If the proposed amendments go into effect, outcome is likely to be that many states won't choose to put up alt fuel signage
  - Planning to hold a few calls to educate coordinators about these changes (12/22,29)
- Public comments can be issued on the federal register, DOT will assess these comments before they issue a ruling. **Between now and March, educate people on these changes, state DOTs to discuss this as an agenda item (support flexibility for states and no prohibition for alt fuel signage).**
- Options:
  - Create another category of blue signs? Can't do - limit for the types of blue signs near exits is 4 (gas, lodging, etc.)
  - Open to changing gas to fuel, but this will probably be an uphill battle with DOT (**Michael proposed that all coalitions submit comments - draft language from SCC; jointly signed one letter). Propose getting as many other entities to support our position and submit comments to MUTCD.**)
  - Other pathway to opposing this is through Congress. HR passed a bill directing DOT to update the manual to allow specific service logos for EV signage (will be reintroduced next year as part of surface transportation reauthorization package to set rules for how transportation funding is approved). As fuel agnostic advocates, we have important stakeholders that have tried to get their logos on specific service signage, can reach out to federal reps to support this and the expansion of language to include alt fuel corridor fuels
- Discussion:
  - Most direct way to impact this would be Congressional language passed into law - Wiedmeyer
  - Jan 7 is our next call with state DOTs
  - What is federal DOT's justification for this change? - Question from Basques, Kessler (Staley answered the question)
    - "eliminate driver expectancy confusion"
    - Clarifying that gas means gasoline (not all gaseous fuels)
    - Assume this must be coming from petroleum lobbying
    - VA: longstanding policy to not put any amenities on things that aren't fuel signs
    - Going to require that states "shall" have a state plan for specific service signage
  - Transportation engineering committee - association of state highway transportation officials, Michael identified voting members of this committee, who will likely make comment. State coalitions reach out to members of that committee from home state with educational materials
    - Not going to propose a ballot, but will bring it up for discussion in subcommittee

- Collection of comments from state highway officials will carry a lot of weight with DOT, important to get as many comments as possible so record is overwhelming
- Look at what Indiana has done related to this, indication of where Buttigieg may fall on some of these issues
- Come up with base documents that we want to send to heavy hitters (PERC, EDTA, NGVA, et.) with lots of political capital to comment
- Hopefully some states will have the initiative to do what CA has done and go their own way
- Some signs exist that say fuel and not gas.... Old version of MUTCD had this in it maybe
- Super technical and confusing for folks who haven't been following this - need to do some education with CC folks across the country, ensure that it's not just EV that gets included (what would happen if we do nothing and leave it to Congress)
- Would complicate the MUTCD to break things out into separate fuel types, gas to fuel is simple change
- DOT saying CA guidelines aren't acceptable under new MUTCD
- How can we quickly pull together all the necessary documentation?
  - Michael has this prepared and can share with everyone once Kerry at ALDOT has opportunity to give final comments
- 1/7 call was scheduled based on a planned NCUTCD committee meeting.

#### Next steps

- Forward email Michael sent out about the informational webinar to get people to sign up
- Review whatever Michael sends us in terms of sample language for DOTs
- Find out who our state's committee rep is in AASHTO
- Overly needs to send Zoom invitations for all the below dates, including 1/7 Zoom by Friday, Dec. 18

#### PLANNED FUTURE CALLS (all start at 2pm ET):

- ✓ January 7, 2021 – state DOT reps call
- ✓ January 21
- ✓ February 18
- ✓ March 18

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#### CHAT

13:05:09 From frank@frankmorrisconsulting.com : what was the date JO mentioned for DOT meeting?  
(Jan. 7, 2021)

13:08:05 From Emily Carpenter : Looks great!

13:23:37 From Shauna Basques : Have we heard from DOT their justification for this move?

13:23:51 From Benjamin Kessler Gaa : Can you please submit draft comments to this group? I can run it by our upper management at the Energy Office

13:24:01 From Benjamin Kessler Gaa : Agreed Shauna, where is this coming from?

13:24:03 From Alleyn Harned : Michael Some comments: 1) I love that this is Alabama led and your leadership is very awesome. 2) I think a lot of states including Virginia would endorse the idea of washing out the term Gas/gasoline and moving towards "fuel" to allow for clean fuels and electricity 3) electrify America and EVGo would like branded highway stations 4) petroleum retailers that sell electricity might not bother with the sign. 5) there is a new secretary of transportation in 34 days. Letter could also be signed by DOTs or other state agencies.

13:34:09 From frank@frankmorrisconsulting.com : maybe we review what Indiana DOT has adopted if any thing. with Pete as new DOT sec.

13:37:00 From Benjamin Kessler Gaa : Michael I am glad you are working with us and not against us!

13:41:01 From frank@frankmorrisconsulting.com : we should expect more support for the "green" movement

13:41:12 From frank@frankmorrisconsulting.com : with Biden adm.

13:54:32 From Jennifer Fundora, Clean Cities-Georgia : John Hibbard for GA is already an active participant in the state DOT calls. Not familiar with Alan Davis

14:00:56 From Benjamin Kessler Gaa : Will probably have the same dilemma in SC

14:01:35 From Alleyn Harned : <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/oil-and-petroleum-products/where-our-oil-comes-from.php>