

# Southeastern Corridor Council – Zoom Webinar Notes

26<sup>th</sup> webinar – 4/15/21



Notes taken by Rose; attendance by Vail; chat by Overly. Call started at 2:00pm ET.

## Attendees (32):

### **STATE DOTs (& related)**

FLDOT = Tanner Martin	TDOT = Eric Jackson, Carly Laddusaw, Susan Steffenhagen, Joe Sweat, Nathan Vatter
LADOT = David Miller	<i>Carlyle Jones</i>
NCDOT = Robin Barrows, Heather Hildebrandt, Brian Phillips	

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

AL = <b>Mark Bentley</b> , Phillip Wiedmeyer	NC = Sara Nichols, Caitlin Rose, Carina Soriano	VA = Alleyn Harned, Sarah Stalcup, Matt Wade
AR – Patti Springs	SC = Ben Kessler	DOE = Margaret Smith
FL = Alexander Kolpakov, Alisha Lopez	TN = Shauna Basques, <b>Jonathan Overly</b> , Alexa Voytek	Energetics = Victoria McGarril <i>(Bold = co-chairs)</i>
GA = Jennifer Fundora, Frank Morris		
KY = Emily Carpenter		
LA = Ann Vail		

## **AGENDA**

(Overly) First, ask state DOT reps if anything has changed on their radar for expecting them to make comments about the alt-fuel related signage pieces of the NPA ("Notice of Proposed Amendment")

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(Staley) Review any plans for gathering support for MUTCD changes:

1. Michael will prepare draft and provide instructions for any business or individual to submit comments to the DOCKET (online)
2. Businesses will hopefully put letter on their letterhead and submit through online interface; individuals can attach letter or just put what they want to include in the comments field - HIT SUBMIT
3. Can coalitions or SCC TRACK who has made submissions?
4. Goal of 100 submissions?

*Review website and information that has been placed there to help coalitions.*

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(Overly) Any updates from states:

1. Corridor ID signage
2. Round 5 submissions

## **NOTES**

**SUMMARY** – The group largely discussed getting other entities in each of our states to utilize what has been put out by Alabama Clean Fuels. East TN Clean Fuels will make a statewide email (that others can use to) to provide links and basic information to gather interest and responses from TN. Some links for MUTCD proposed changes were updated on the [corridorcouncil.org](http://corridorcouncil.org) site, including a summary of the Clean Cities suggested comments.

*DETAILED NOTES (from Caitlin Rose) –*

- State DOT reps on call (welcome to leave after MUTCD discussion)
- Michael in discussions, high ranking DOT/FHWA officials aware of concerns with proposed changes, no commitments for reversals made but aware of the issue (impact on rulemaking TBD)
- House Transportation and Infrastructure committee follow up - that staff is aware of the issue to (TEP meetings)
  - AL TEP meetings: brought MUTCD up as an issue in Congressional meetings and asked them to contact appropriate committees
- Submitting a comment on MUTCD FHWA docket:
  - Document Michael sent to group with instructions about submitting a comment
  - MS recommends submitting a PDF letter with the comment (letter as attachment), comment has 5000 character limit, proposed sample language for the comment and a place to upload the PDF letter
  - Template letter available too (overview of "unacceptable changes" and proposed changes/fixes)
  - Comment will post publicly 24-36 hours after submission
  - TN: JO hoping to craft a response that can be from Coalition, will share with Shauna, need to format email to send to stakeholders/constituents about what was submitted
    - Joe TDOT: can serve as point of contact for Shauna if comments with TDEQ need to align (aware of the issue, not sure what response will be) - some of the changes TDOT understood to be rules already (MS mentioned California version, if states want to have flexibility to put EV signs on food offerings for ex they should have the flexibility to do so)
  - Commenting wide open to all types of stakeholders (not sure how they weight the importance of comments, perhaps more importance given to a state DOT compared to private citizen)
  - MS sent info to TEP meeting attendees with drafted language the Congressional offices could send to subcommittee about ACF's concerns as well as appropriations report language (available as an option if state is interested/available to have this type of communication with Congressional delegation)
  - Joint letter wouldn't be much different from individual coalition letter, could be good to have an additional comment with more signatures
    - Has anyone already submitted comments besides AL? no
    - Issues with COGs/government employees submitting comments (even a grey area if we submitted as individuals)
    - What about coalitions in same position as COGs/gov employees - can you get stakeholders to submit on our behalf? - depends (would have to come directly from stakeholder and issues with directly asking them to do that)
    - Any major trade associations submitting comments? Conversations happening with NGVA and PERC (concerned and engaged)
    - Contact with NATSO? Ben has contact there and can send to Michael
    - JO asked about NC - Heather: response will come from different DOT section than Heather, she's raised concerns to appropriate people at DOT but mostly out of her hands, not sure what official statement from DOT will be, Heather encouraged them to reach out to Clean Cities to learn more
    - Ann shares legislative updates and how to submit comments but not what to say, we can share link to Corridor Council site just as a resource
- Some interest from states outside of Southeast in participating in Corridor Council (MD, UT, OK)
  - PW: all have common interest, more participation is better than less

- BK: SE EV working group initiative through NASEO (mapping, best practices) could loop them in
- Next meetings (5/20 just coalitions and 6/17 with DOTs) - hopefully get back to normal conversation
  - How long will it take for MUTCD comments to be looked at? States can still make plans for sign locations now (don't have to install yet) and use as communication tools - move forward on planning part of corridor ID signage
  - Joe TDOT: would have to change rules if specific service signage was at play
  - Clean Cities should take inventory of where all fuels are, and which ones want to be on signage - goal for this year would be making that list
  - TN knows where stations are but haven't connected to exits unless they're tied to corridor designation - do we already have all the info for the above item? Or do we need to get that
  - Focus so far has been on the ID side of the question, we may need to wait for a while for MUTCD to be finalized based on our comments, then could think about the needs for general and specific service signage
  - Need to talk to EV folks too about future actions that may be needed with general and specific service signage
  - MS - MUTCD updates take a really long time (AL: if ID signs have to be paired with general service signage and proposed MUTCD changes go into effect, probably wouldn't sign for alt fuels)
  - What else can we do if MUTCD comments will take a long time to process?
    - Installation part
    - Partnerships in-state or inter-state
    - What are holes in fuel deployment and how to address
  - Likely that there will be action from current administration about gap filling and infrastructure deployment (and signage??) before MUTCD comments are done
  - HIP money - is all of it subject to Buy America? - yes. Any \$ through FHWA is subject to Buy America, only DCF
  - Shauna looking to see if any fast fill CNG vendors meet Buy America requirements
  - If we can figure out what funding does and does not have Buy America requirements
  - Unclear guidance nationally about Buy America, varied interpretations on the state level because of this - has potential to impact any eligible transportation project (including alt fuels) - Susan interested in how other states interpret Buy America and what level of documentation is needed to meet compliance
- SEPW Bill has not been introduced for this congress (didn't pass last congress)
- HIP is source of \$\$ for signage (must meet Buy America), CMAQ as well
- Certification for products to meet Buy America (i.e. how would someone even know if they are compliant) - products have to self-certify
  - Many inconsistencies with this policy at the federal level