



OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 18, 2004

SUBJECT: BIG RIG INCIDENT DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file report on big rig incident demonstration projects.

ISSUE

Staff has been working with Caltrans and CHP to develop new innovative strategies that would help reduce freeway incident clearance times on heavily traveled truck routes. A 90-minute quick clearance goal for major big rig incidents, which is similar to the goal of other states, has been established. Two demonstrations are being considered for implementation to determine if they might be effective in reducing traffic congestion resulting from big rig incidents.

DISCUSSION

Big Rig FSP Demo

In December 2003, the SAFE Board approved a grant to LACMTA authorizing funds for the implementation of a Freeway Service Patrol Big Rig demonstration (demo) project along the I-710 freeway from the Port of Long Beach to the I-5 interchange. The demo will focus on the majority of big rig incidents, but that do not require salvage and recovery or hazardous materials. The demonstration project has been on hold until the CHP could assess whether or not they could support the demonstration as the new operational policies might have statewide implications. CHP has just recently affirmed its support for the demo (Attachment 1) and work has started towards the implementation of the project. A recommendation to award a contract for the Big Rig FSP Demo will likely be submitted prior to the end of this fiscal year.

90-Minute Quick Clearance Incentive Program

A new and complimentary strategy for improving traffic along another high truck incident route will also be developed. The second demo will be developed along Route 60 from downtown to the Los Angeles and San Bernardino County line. The second demo will be established with the intent of improving big rig incident response times (90-minute quick clearance time) while providing the big rig contractors with financial incentives to meet the

90-minute quick clearance time goal. This demo will focus on clearance of major big rig incidents that have the potential of generating significant traffic congestion.

The current practice for tow contractors to respond to incidents on freeways allows for contractors to be compensated at an hourly rate. The hourly rate structure does not inherently provide the tow contractor with the necessary incentive to react, respond and clear freeway incidents in the most effective and efficient manner. The intent of establishing a quick clearance incentive program is to determine if the current fee structure for tow companies can be improved so that response and clearance times can be reduced.

Both demonstrations are being developed as a partnership between Caltrans, CHP and LACMTA. It is likely that operational policies will also be developed that will also require coordination with other first responders (i.e. Coroner, Fire, Police, etc.). An incident response task force will be re-established to develop the quick-clearance demo. The task force will establish an implementation schedule and plan of action. A recommendation to the Board on a quick clearance incentive plan will be included in the FY06 budget for consideration.

NEXT STEPS

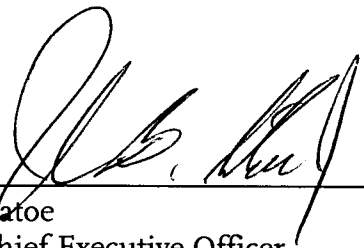
Continue the CHP, Caltrans and LACMTA partnership arrangement to develop:

1. Develop the Big Rig FSP Demo along the I-710 freeway
2. Establish an LA County Incident Management Task Force
3. Develop the 90-Minute Quick Clearance Incentive Program
4. Establish pre-demo baseline data conditions.

ATTACHMENT (S):

- A. Letter of Support for Big Rig Demo from CHP (dated October 19, 2004)

Prepared by: Al Martinez, FSP Program Manager
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John B. Catoe
Deputy Chief Executive Officer



Roger Snoble
Chief Executive Officer

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October 19, 2004

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Mr. Roger Snoble
Chief Executive Officer
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Dear Mr. Snoble:

Roger

Last year the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) developed an innovative plan to help mitigate traffic congestion along the heavily truck-traveled I-710 freeway corridor in Los Angeles County. Specifically, this plan provided for a two-year demonstration project that would deploy Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) big rig tow trucks. These FSP trucks would employ the same strategy as the regular FSP fleet, providing rapid response to incidents and quick clearance of vehicles to a secondary off-freeway location.

After reviewing the merits of this proposed plan, I believe our agencies should move forward to implement this program as soon as possible. Since congestion caused by commercial vehicle incidents has such a detrimental effect on the entire traffic pattern, it is critical that we work together to develop and implement any reasonable means to relieve its impact on the motoring public.

It is my desire to maintain open lines of communication between MTA and CHP in order to make the best use of our joint problem-solving and traffic management skills. Through our cooperative efforts, we can continue to develop new projects to improve the flow of traffic and minimize the negative impact of congestion on the freeway system.

Should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Chief Adam Cuevas, Enforcement Services Division, at (916) 445-3253.

Sincerely,

M. L. Brown
M. L. BROWN
Commissioner

