

Minutes
Multimodal Commerce Advisory Commission

Thursday, June 16, 2022
Louisiana State Capitol
Senate Committee Room E
1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Commission Members:

Renee Lapeyrolerie
Shawn Welcome
Shawn Wilson
Honorable Mike Reese
Honorable Vincent J. Pierre
Honorable Mark Abraham
Honorable Scott McKnight
Lynn Hohensee
Z. David Deloach
Heath Allen
Renee Amar
Carmack M. Blackmon
Don Sanders
Aaron Smith
John Spain
Honorable Patrick McMath
Blaine Sheets

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

The Commissioner called roll and the following was established:

Members Present:

Renee Lapeyrolerie, Chairman
Shawn Welcome
Senator Mark Abraham
Z. David Deloach
Heath Allen
Renee Amar
Carmack M. Blackmon

III. Because there was not a quorum, the minutes of the October 21, 2021 meeting were not approved.

IV. Welcome and update to members by Commissioner Renee Lapeyrolerie.

V. Briefings by each Section Head:

A. Aviation Director for DOTD, Brad Brandt

Aviation appropriation generates roughly \$28.5M annually for airport construction projects through the TTF and we have about \$1.4M for operations. Regarding IJA we project our airports can get about 25M of that 1B coming in to Louisiana, assuming that our airports have projects ready or have coordinated their efforts with the FAA to go after those funds. The FAA is going to issue \$15B in \$2.8B annually across the nation. Louisiana airports are expected to receive \$179M over the next 5 years from this entitlement formula. What that means to Louisiana, on an annual bases, is our airport receive \$35.7M annually from that entitlement.

B. Ports and Waterways Director for DOTD, Randall Withers

We have heard the IJA and the billions of dollars that are available. We have been working with our ports for them to go out and seek out those federal funds. We all know that State dollars are limited, but if federal dollars can be used 100% or a combination of Federal, State and local dollars that could be a win-win for all of us. There are numerous grants such as INFRA, Raise (formally BUILD or TIGER), America's Marine Highway Projects, Port Infrastructure just to name a few. Governor Edwards recently signed HB2 and the Port Priority Program is receiving \$39.4M again this year. This allows 13 projects to receive funds to either partially fund or fully fund projects.

Z. David Deloach: Now a lot of that money from the IJA program is going directly to the Corps of Engineers to do projects, but you could listen to Congressman Graves and you will understand that the Corps of Engineers does not necessarily tell you what they are going to get and how much they have to spend. It's the same with everything we have to do in the marine industry, we don't know where the money is going because it is filtered out through the Corps of Engineers and we don't have a state presence when it comes to getting some of that money for improvements. I think Texas has a part of their DOT that focuses on improvements to their intracoastal canal that runs across Texas. So we should look at that.

Chris Collins: Many of the things we get we would not get if we did not go to our congressional district, to the Corps, to headquarters in DC, to the Asst. Secretary of the Army, we do that. We advocate for all our projects. The money Congress appropriated in 2019 will not reach us until two years later. There is money from the infrastructure act that went to the Corps District, Corps HQ takes their plan and reviews it to see how much they have to spend, and then they have to get it approved again.

C. Freight and Passenger Rail Director for DOTD, Dean Goodell

As IJA seems to be a hot topic, on the rail side I am not sure exactly how much the federal government has assigned to rail but the majority is going to passenger rail. There has been a large amount set aside for Amtrak and the other money not going to Amtrak is coming down through competitive grants. Two years ago, we received \$3M in Capital Outlay. That \$3M is going to Short Line Rail Infrastructure Program to

upgrade the railroad tracks on some of our smaller more needy shortline railroads in the state. The other projects we are working on the largest one is the New Orleans Rail Gateway Program we have been working on that for several years. We are doing two environmental studies in New Orleans as part of the Gateway program. Another important issue is the passenger rail. The one being directed by the Southern Rail Commission is the New Orleans to Mobile train. There is an issue between CXS Railroad and Amtrak and they have taken the issue to the Surface Transportation Board just last Friday. The other one we are doing is looking at the Baton Rouge to New Orleans Train. The last study that was done was done in 2014 we are now starting an update to be updated information before we can speak with the new owners, Canadian Pacific RR who is buying the Kansas City Southern RR.

D. Commercial Trucking Director for DOTD, Stephen Holliday

The trucking industry is about a \$700B industry and moves over 71% of all freight and 6% of all full time jobs in the country are in the trucking industry. It is an important part of multimodal in the state. Senator Abraham we get no money for the trucking division, our budget has doubled every year – zero, zero, zero. But that doesn't stop us from looking at the IJA and trying to find opportunities where that money can be leveraged in the trucking industry and multimodal freight based economic development. Since 2022 the pressures and challenges like driver shortages, truck parking capacity, congestion, escalating costs have put tremendous pressures on the trucking industry. The ATA estimates we are about 85,000 drivers short and by 2030 they estimate 160,000 drivers short. We have been involved with a CDL apprentice program at a national level where we've passed legislation in this state where we have a CDL apprentice program with the community college system that has been a great success. Truck parking is also an issue being talked about on a national level. For every eleven trucks, there is only one parking space. There is funding in the IJA for safety to advance truck parking. We would like to see our state tap into that. We have a major outreach for congestion mitigation for our I-10 widening project in Baton Rouge. The trucking industry has met with stakeholders discussing the issues they will face during construction with oversized loads and hazardous materials. We are working with LMTA to prepare for a one-year period when the interstate is reduced to one lane going over the Mississippi River Bridge in Baton Rouge.

Renee Amar: Senator Abraham, thank you for working with one of our truckers from Lake Charles to bring that issue to the board and largely my board members are sheepish about anything they consider being not safe. I think we understand it's because of the people on top of the billboards. Their perception was that this could be used against them in a court of law. There are regulations that after you are gone for so many years. I appreciate the time you committed to that and there are people who are trying to come up with innovative solutions. I wanted to echo your sentiments about truck parking. I am getting many calls from lawmakers interesting enough, because they have truck drivers parked on the shoulders of their interstates who are obviously getting tickets. The lawmakers don't like the perception of that and they call me because they think there is something I can do to education those drivers who may be from California. This is a federal issue and we hope it will be dealt with in the near future.

I am starting to get calls about the electric vehicle chargers and I think that is something that needs to be dealt with also by DOTD. Apparently there is funding in the IJA for the chargers; I don't know that they are hydrogen I think they are electric, I am hearing from some of my dealers that are interested in that. They don't know where to go, there is some non-responsiveness going on and I don't know that it is necessarily DOTD, it may be some other organizations. They really want to do something but want to know how to take the next step. If we could be given a coordinator, we will be more than willing to educate our members about what they can do about that.

Each Section Head discussed with Senator Abraham how the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds will be used for their sections, if available.

- VI.** Comments by Commission members Heath Allen and Shawn Welcome.
- VII.** No Public Comments were made.
- VIII.** Announcements: No future meeting date was set.
- IX.** Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

The Archived Video may be found by going to: https://senate.la.gov/s_video/2022/june