

Idaho Transportation Board

Subcommittee on 129,000 Pound Truck Routes

December 2, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Subcommittee met remotely.

Idaho Transportation Board (ITB) Subcommittee on 129,000 Pound Truck Routes Chairman Dwight Horsch called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, December 2, 2020. ITB Members Jim Thompson and Julie DeLorenzo participated.

ITB Chairman Bill Moad attended, along with principal Subcommittee staff members and advisors Deputy Attorney General Tim Thomas, Chief Engineer Blake Rindlisbacher, Freight Program Manager (FPM) Scott Luekenga, and Executive Assistant to the Board (EAB) Sue S. Higgins.

Minutes: November 19, 2020. Member DeLorenzo made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2020 meeting. Member Thompson seconded the motion and it passed unopposed.

Case #202002: US-26, Milepost (MP) 24.83 to 34.302, District 3. FPM Luekenga presented the Chief Engineer's evaluation of US-26. The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) confirmed that the highway falls under the red route category allowing 115-foot overall vehicle length and a 6.5-foot off-track. The bridge analysis determined that the seven bridges on the route will safely support vehicle combinations up to 129,000 pounds, assuming the axle configuration conforms to the legal requirements. The surface condition is mainly pavement in fair condition; however, a short stretch is concrete in poor condition. The route has six non-interstate high accident intersection locations in the top 100 and two high accident intersection location clusters. Twelve of the 388 crashes on this route between 2014 and 2018 involved a tractor-trailer combination that resulted in two injuries. FPM Luekenga said the route connects with SH-16 and I-84, which are both 129,000 pound routes. The Chief Engineer's evaluation recommends approving the route.

Member DeLorenzo said the pavement condition has changed. A pavement rehabilitation project was completed so now all of the surface is rated good. Regarding the public comments, she said a number of them appear to be due to misconceptions about 129,000 pound vehicle combinations. Because of the additional axles required on these configurations, they result in less wear and tear on the road than the 105,500 pound vehicle combinations that currently operate on the route.

Member DeLorenzo moved to send case #202002, US-26, milepost 24.83 to 34.302, to the Transportation Board with a recommendation for approval.

Because the Subcommittee is comprised of three members, Chairman Horsch said a second is not required for motions.

The motion passed unopposed.

Case #202001, SH-19, MP 0.0 to 34.638. FPM Luekenga said the application is actually for SH-19, MP 0.0 to 4.827 and MP 34.195 to 34.638. The DMV confirmed that this highway falls under the blue route category allowing 95-foot overall vehicle length and a 5.5-foot off-track. The bridge analysis determined that the bridge on the route will safely support vehicle combinations up to 129,000 pounds, assuming the axle configuration conforms to the legal requirements. The pavement condition is good to very poor. There are no safety concerns and there were no accidents involving tractor-trailer combinations on this route from 2014 to 2018. The public comments received on this route generally expressed concern with safety and congestion. The Chief Engineer's evaluation recommends approving the route.

Member DeLorenzo said there are plans to improve the surface condition in 2021. She added that the comments again appear related to misunderstanding of 129,000 pound vehicle combinations.

Member DeLorenzo moved to recommend approval of case #202001, SH-19, MP 0.0 to 34.638 to the Transportation Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Case #202003, I-84 Business Loop, MP 61.797 to 58.665, MP 58.67 to MP 57.64, and MP 58.665 to MP 55.9, District 3. FPM Luekenga said the application is actually for a continuous route connecting SH-55, SH-45, and I-84, which are already 129,000 pound routes. The DMV confirmed that this highway falls under the red route category allowing 115-foot overall vehicle length and a 6.5-foot off-track. The bridge analysis determined that the two bridges on the route will safely support vehicle combinations up to 129,000 pounds, assuming the axle configuration conforms to the legal requirements. The asphalt on the route is in fair to good condition. There are three non-interstate high accident intersection locations and two high accident intersection location clusters on the route. Between 2014 and 2018, 21 of the 1,208 crashes involved tractor-trailer combinations. The public comments received on this route were similar to the other comments, generally expressing concern with safety and congestion. The Chief Engineer's evaluation recommends approving the route.

Due to questions on the three different milepost sections, District 3 Operations Manager (OM) Jason Brinkman explained the route, which includes two one-way couplets in the City of Nampa. He said the map can be revised for clarity.

Member DeLorenzo said the evaluation indicates that a portion of the route is in very poor condition, but the report does not reflect pavement rehabilitation projects completed after 2015.

Chairman Horsch asked if there are plans to widen the route, add turn lanes, or make other major improvements. OM Brinkman said there are no major improvements planned on I-84 Business Loop or SH-19. There are plans to widen US-26; however, funding has only been identified to widen a portion of the route. There is also a project underway now to widen US-26 east of SH-16.

Member DeLorenzo noted the public comments were similar to the comments received on the other two routes and generally indicate a misunderstanding of these vehicle combinations.

She reiterated that 129,000 pound vehicle combinations have more axles, resulting in less wear and tear on the road. Approval of this application will result in fewer trucks on the road from the applicant, which should improve safety and reduce congestion.

Member DeLorenzo moved to recommend approval of case #202003, I-84 Business Loop, MP 61.797 to 58.665, MP 58.67 to MP 57.64, and MP 58.665 to MP 55.9, to the Transportation Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Thompson noted that the applicant will operate fewer trucks on the route, but questioned other companies operating at weights up to 129,000 pounds. Member DeLorenzo concurred that there may be other companies hauling at weights up to 129,000 pounds. It is difficult to know if they will travel on these routes or other 129,000 pound routes, as they generally take the most direct route.

In response to Member DeLorenzo's question, OM Brinkman said it appears the applications include local roads, but he does not know the disposition of those.

Revisions to 129,000 Pound Truck Route Manual. FPM Luekenga presented additional revisions to the Manual based on the discussions at the last meeting. The main changes include the addition of an internal kick-off meeting when an application is received. The key players will review the responsibilities and establish due dates. This should help expedite the process. The public comment period was also changed from 30 days to 15.

Chief Engineer Rindlisbacher said he talked to Legal about the 14-day appeal process after the Letter of Determination is issued and may include language regarding that administrative process.

Member DeLorenzo appreciated the inclusion of the timeline, but noted it only addresses routes recommended for approval. It does not address the process or timeline for other scenarios. FPM Luekenga said he can include timelines for other scenarios.

There was some discussion on the 15-day public comment period and ensuring sufficient notice is provided, particularly if weekly newspapers are used for the notification. ITB Chairman Moad suggested working closer with the industry on 129,000 pound routes, including the Idaho Trucking Association and ITD's Trucking Advisory Council. The Subcommittee concurred and recommended incorporating that into the Manual and presenting the Manual at the next Subcommittee meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Sue S. Higgins

Respectfully submitted by:  
SUE S. HIGGINS  
Executive Assistant & Secretary  
Idaho Transportation Board