

Section 305 Technical Sub-Committee

March 18, 2010 Conference Call Summary

The Section 305 Technical Sub-Committee held its third weekly conference call on Thursday, March 18, 2010 at 3:00pm. Dale Engelhardt, Amtrak, chaired the call on behalf of Sub-Committee Chair Mario Bergeron, Amtrak.

Participating on the call were representatives of FRA, Amtrak, Volpe, AASHTO and 4 State DOTs. (New York, Washington State, California and Illinois)

There were concerns regarding the accuracy of the email list for the Sub-Committee – as some members did not get the agenda or other material sent out by Dale in advance of this call. Steve Hewitt, AASHTO consultant, (who has been tasked by AASHTO at the Chair's request, to provide Secretariat services to the Sub-Committee) will send out an updated email list at the end of the call. (List is attached to these meeting notes) Clearly the list will need continued revising, as it is a living document – new members being added quite regularly. Steve will be the keeper of the list.

Dale opened the meeting reminding call-in participants to make sure that they have reviewed the Clearance Diagrams distributed during the last conference call. He asked that States review the diagrams and provide any comments, exceptions, or unique requirements, as soon as possible. He has asked that all members respond to him even if there are no changes or comments. This will ensure Dale that members have had an opportunity to review the Diagrams.

Shayne Gill, AASHTO, and George Weber, Illinois DOT, reported on the logistics for the first in-person meeting of the Technical Sub-Committee to be held in Chicago at the Thompson Center, April 22, 2010. Shayne has provided all members with Hotel information and advised that when reserving a room – ask for the **government rate**. The rates shown on Shayne's Hotel list are specially negotiated rates for Illinois DOT.

Dale asked that members review the "Task List" (separate attachment) that he has sent out in regards to the upcoming meeting on April 22nd. Recognizing that the meeting is likely to attract around 200 attendees, including Sub-Committee members and industry representatives, Dale recommended that the industry be divided into "Product Families" and that there be break-out sessions of those "families" each led by a 305 Technical Sub-Committee member.

Dale further explained the "draft" meeting format that he was proposing for consideration. (Currently under review of the Chairman before being formally presented to Sub-Committee members) To begin the meeting – the Technical Sub-Committee members would meet separately for about 2 hours prior to convening a meeting of all attendees. At the convening of the larger group there would be a number of Power Point presentations given with the intent of providing background, context, status, and expectations of the Section 305 Next Generation Equipment Pool Committee and its Technical Sub-Committee.

At around 11:00am the break-out sessions would be convened until approximately 3:00pm, at which time the entire group would reconvene and each of the “Product Families” would report out on the results of its break-out session.

There was a great deal of discussion as to the pros and cons of this format and the logistics of accommodating what Dale thought could be as many as 8-10 “Product Families”. George Weber, Illinois DOT, expressed concern over finding available space in the Thompson Center. Space is extremely hard to come by – he has reserved the auditorium and another conference room that will hold up to 75 people – but is unsure he will be able to reserve additional space.

Kevin Kesler, FRA, commented that FRA (Eloy Martinez in the lead) has been working closely with “car builders” and had formed quite a strong coalition already.

Other comments expressed concern over the level of understanding of the work of the 305 Committee and the Technical Sub-Committee by industry members. There were suggestions to “step back” a bit and ensure that the industry was appropriately up to speed on PRIIA Section 305 and was given some background and context. There were also concerns that the Technical Sub-Committee did not yet have a completed Work Plan and it may be too soon to ask the industry to tell us “what they have.” There are questions that the industry has in regards to; PRIIA Section 305; intellectual property rights; Buy American provisions etc. - many basic questions that need to be answered first.

There was also a sentiment that part of this effort was meant to begin to get feedback/input from the industry – and the meeting is an opportunity to define to the industry “what we need”, “what our requirements are for standardizing parts”, and to find out “what the operating conditions out there are”. Kevin Kesler advised that the industry is anxious to engage and should be sent “concepts/approaches” in advance and then it may be possible to control the discussions with sub-groups in the format suggested. He also noted that it is important to try to get to consensus on standards.

Dale informed those on the call that a letter of invitation to the industry has already been sent out – signed by Mario. Concern was expressed by some who had seen the letter or had heard from those who had received it, that it was signed by Mario, in his Amtrak position, rather than as Chair of the Section 305 Technical Sub-Committee. Industry representatives had expressed confusion over whether the Chicago meeting was an Amtrak meeting or a 305 meeting. In order to better establish the “305 brand” it was the sense of the group that future correspondence should come from the Section 305 Technical Committee, with Mario signing as its Chair. Dale agreed that this makes sense and will raise the point to Mario.

It was agreed that communication with the industry is vital to the success of the effort and that the more information the industry members have in advance, the better prepared they will be.

Dale felt that many of the concerns raised were good points and that the overview presentations at the beginning of the meeting would help in bringing the industry up to

speed and setting up the break-out sessions to be productive. He also emphasized that the Chairman (Mario) had not approved the proposed agenda and format, at this point, and that he was awaiting Mario's input before sending it out to the Technical Sub-Committee members for their review.

Dale asked that all members review the Task List "straw man" he had distributed and provide him with input by COB Monday, March 22nd. Members should make recommendations to Dale regarding "Product Families" that are not on the Task List as well as comments on those that are.

There was also discussion, led by FRA, about getting a better understanding of recent procurements that States have done in order to organize styles and consolidate tendencies of States. After some discussion, Eloy Martinez, FRA, was tasked with the action item of preparing a "framework of the essence of information" regarding States vehicle purchases made recently, and was to identify the framework of a States questionnaire by COB on Monday, 3/22/2010. The goal is to have a draft Power Point for Sub-Committee review. Eloy asked for an electronic version of the last equipment survey that had been completed to assist him in his assignment. Dale and Ken Uznanski, Amtrak, stated that they only have the information in hard copy, but Dale agreed to try to get it electronically and send it to Eloy.

Dale reminded the call participants that the immediate task of the Sub-Committee is to deliver a specification for a Bi-Level Car to the Section 305 Committee's Executive Board by July and, if adopted, "then that would become the standard as defined by the Executive Committee"

It was also suggested, and agreed, that for future conference calls, members who have proposed agenda items should submit those items to Dale by COB each Monday in order to have the item(s) included in the agenda on the weekly Thursday call.

The call concluded at approximately 3:45pm Eastern.

(See below: Update Email list for the Technical Sub-Committee and Member List for the Executive Committee)

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