

# STA/MHI MAKING STEADY PROGRESS IN REGS CHANGES/HARMONIZATION

*The STA is pleased report considerable progress on a number of regulatory changes/modifications we've been pressing the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure (MHI) to make.*

*A general dialogue between our Association and Highways Minister Wayne Elhard is ongoing, and the Ministry has agreed to a number of significant changes that will positively affect the truck transport industry. As well as Minister Elhard, MHI Chief of Staff Clay Reich, MHI Deputy Minister John Law and MHI Assistant Deputy Minister George Stamatinos have been instrumental in the promoting the changes outlined below:*

**Elimination of the \$0.14/km TPP fee for EEMV companies.** The fees have been eliminated effective April 1, 2008. All refunds have been sent out for EEMV in Nov./Dec. An annual Administration Fee of \$2,000 is applied to EEMV agreement holders.

## **Policy change for Turnpikes and Rockies**

MHI has made a policy change with respect to the length of EEMVs in an effort to progress resolution of some issues affecting harmonization of LCV operations within the three Western Provinces. On January 16, 2009 MHI sent a letter to companies participating in the EEMV program advising them that the Ministry has extended, by permit, the overall length of the Turnpike Double and Triple Trailer Combination units to 41m from 38m and Rocky Mountain Doubles to 34m from 31m while operating on the 4 lane system. Rocky Mountain Doubles while operating on the 2 lane system will remain at 31m in length.

## **With regard to the EEMV Program permit questions.**

A policy document is being drafted to transfer the EEMV companies currently operating within the harmonization criteria to SGI. Companies that wish to operate beyond the harmonization criteria will continue to be permitted under a Transportation Partnership Agreement (TPP).

To date, the contact person at SGI has been Bruce Kush, Manager Permit Office (775-6599). Matters affecting harmonization will continue to be managed by the Ministry, either Les Bell or Harold Hugg.

Through SGI, the cost of obtaining permits for EEMV operations will be reduced to a fleet permit cost of \$300 from the current \$2300/yr under a TPP agreement (\$300/yr fleet permit cost plus the \$2000/yr administration fee).

Once the transfer process has been implemented, permit renewals for those vehicles operating within the harmonization criteria will be obtained through the normal permitting process at SGI.

### **The future process for managing harmonization matters.**

In the future, as different vehicle configurations are added under the Vehicle Weight and Dimension Regulations, they will not need to be permitted. It is difficult for MHI to say whether all vehicles that meet the harmonization criteria will be transferred over to SGI. It would be the intent, however, that where a policy change to meet the harmonization criteria can be permitted through SGI it will be. Vehicles that operate beyond what is allowed under the Regulations or the harmonization criteria will continue to be administered by a Transportation Partnership Agreement (TPP).

### **Interest in an EEMV Pilot Project on Hwy #7.**

An initial Pilot Project for the operation of turnpike doubles on Hwy #7 from Saskatoon to the Alberta border (evening operation during low traffic volumes) terminated in 1998. The traffic volumes that were considered in the Pilot Project on Hwy #7 have changed considerably since that time. Before consideration can be given to re-running the Pilot Project, a review of the parameters under which the 1998 pilot project operated will have to be undertaken. Some due diligence and pre-work needs to be done before MHI considers a second pilot. MHI will be doing the due-diligence work over the next several months and I will report progress/findings will be reported to the STA on this work as it becomes available.

### **MHI internal discussion on increasing EEMVs from 90 km/hr to 100 km/hr.**

Further to meetings MHI has indicated that it would move to the 100km/hr speed threshold in the interest of harmonization amongst the three provinces. As part of moving to the higher 100 km/hr operating speed for EEMVs MHI is pursuing the development of a plan to transfer the EEMV program sector of the Transportation Partnership Agreement (TPP) to SGI as a simple permit program for those operations that meet a set of harmonization principles shared by all three Prairie provinces. Any EEMV operations outside of the harmonization initiative would remain under TPP operating specifications including 90 km/hr. Updates on this process will be reported to the STA.

**The Ministry re-evaluation of the Adverse Weather Model.** After further discussion and in the interest of furthering EEMV harmonization with our neighbouring provinces MHI's present thinking is to drop the adverse weather restrictions from the EEMV program as part of moving these agreements to SGI in a manner similar to the speed initiative above.

### **The Ministry will examine routes that can handle 63,500 kg and other weights.**

MHI has reviewed these weights on bridge structures on the National Highway System (all of Highways #1, #7, #11 and #16; Hwy #10 from Balgonie to Yorkton; Hwy #6/#39 from Regina to US Border at Portal; #2 from MJ to Chamberlain and from PA to La Ronge) and has concluded that this system could support this increase in weight. Expansion of the 63,500 kg beyond the National Highway System (NHS) would require further review to determine the fitness of bridges to carry the higher 63 500 kg. MHI engineering staff will continue with this review as time allows. The STA's interest in the weight increase is related to more weight on the tridem axle group since the benefit of an increase on the tandems is minimal. The 63,500 kg on the NHS will allow the GVW to be obtained on a combination of additional weight on either/both the tridem and tandems axle groups. With regard to implementation MHI is pursuing a change in regulations. Unfortunately MHI

anticipates the regulation change to be delayed until the fall because of the current backlog in the regulatory/legislative change schedule. Until such time as the regulations are changed single trip permits can be made available from the SGI permit office for these movements on the NHS.

**The Ministry will assess the possibility of allowing increased weights for wide-based tires that currently operate at 3,850 kg/tire.** The request has been forwarded to the MHI engineering group for analysis of what road impacts will result by increasing the weights above the current level of 3,850 kg/tire. Results of the analysis will be reported to the STA once it has been completed.

*The preceding information was compiled from numerous e-mail correspondence between MHI and the STA.  
-January 26, 2009.*