

COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT



ROY ANTAL/Leader-Post

Neil Morrison is one traffic officer who will work to reduce regulatory barriers between the Saskatchewan and Alberta borders.

Sask., Alta. agree to reduce barriers

By **BARB PACHOLIK**
 Leader-Post

Truckers may soon find the road between Saskatchewan and Alberta a little smoother thanks to an agreement between the two provinces to reduce regulatory barriers.

Steve Balzer, CEO of Trans-All Group of Companies and a member of the Saskatchewan Trucking Association, called the move to harmonize policies and regulations for commercial vehicle operations between the two provinces significant.

"It's exciting. In my mind, it's the foundation of a very strong future," Balzer said following the announcement Tuesday.

He said the changes should save valuable time by cutting down on red tape. For example, Balzer noted a trucker hauling a load from Alberta to Saskatchewan has to contend with different weight restrictions.

While exact changes are still being discussed, truckers should see the same weight requirement in both provinces.

Alberta Transportation Minister Luke Ouellette was in Regina to ink the "memorandum of understanding" (MOU) with Saskatchewan Highways and Infrastructure Minister Jim Reiter. The MOU is intended to reduce barriers to trade.

"Right now, you could routinely have a trucker that does cross-border hauling stopped on one side of the border, then stopped on the other side of the border

by compliance officers looking for the exact same thing," Reiter told reporters.

"They're doing their job, but it just would make a lot more sense for us to be working together so that trucker's dealing with one compliance officer."

Reiter said the differing requirements in each province add unnecessary costs to trucking.

The changes will mean goods move more efficiently across the border, which should make them more affordable for average citizens, he added.

The MOU, which came about as a result of a Saskatchewan-Alberta cabinet meeting a year ago, provides a framework for addressing such items as special permits, vehicle weights and dimensions, co-operative enforcement activities and safety regulations.

For example, under the current system, the operator of a "turnpike double" (a semi with two long trailers) has to meet different conditions in each province for getting a permit.

"We're committed to seeing that regulations don't impede the economic competitiveness of either province," Ouellette said.

Reiter said the changes won't jeopardize safety on the roads. "It's just working more effectively and efficiently."

He said he's been in discussions with his counterpart in Manitoba, who expressed interest in the MOU.

"I can see this expanding down the road to include more of the western provinces."



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
“Commercial Vehicle Harmonization”

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) EXECUTED THE __ DAY OF __ 2009

BETWEEN:

**HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
IN RIGHT OF ALBERTA**

**AS REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTER OF
TRANSPORTATION (hereinafter called
“Alberta”)**

AND

**HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
IN RIGHT OF SASKATCHEWAN**

**AS REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTER HIGHWAYS AND
INFRASTRUCTURE (hereinafter called
“Saskatchewan”)**

HEREIN REFERRED TO AS “THE PARTIES”

WHEREAS

Alberta and Saskatchewan have a long history of cooperation on harmonizing commercial vehicle regulations and policies.

WHEREAS

At the inaugural joint Alberta-Saskatchewan cabinet meeting in September 2008, Alberta and Saskatchewan agreed to ensure that transportation regulations not unnecessarily impede the competitiveness of industries in both provinces.

THEREFORE,

The parties to this Memorandum agree to the following:

Article 1: Purpose

Alberta and Saskatchewan commit to reducing barriers to interprovincial transportation by improving the compatibility of policy and regulation for commercial vehicle operations within and between jurisdictions while ensuring highway safety is enhanced and the highway infrastructure is protected.

It is acknowledged that each jurisdiction may have policy and regulation which governs the intra-provincial operation of commercial vehicles which may have less restrictive conditions than those stipulated in this Memorandum of Understanding.

Article 2: Scope

In order to cooperatively address issues and reduce barriers regarding commercial transportation policy, Alberta and Saskatchewan agree to the following:

- The Harmonization of Special Permit Conditions for Turnpike Doubles;
- The Harmonization of Special Permit Conditions for Oversize and Overweight Indivisible Loads;
- The Harmonization of the Maximum Gross Vehicle Weight for B-trains;
- The Establishment of an Inter-provincial Heavy Haul / High Clearance Corridor;
- The Harmonization of Special Permit Conditions for the movement of manufactured homes;

- The Harmonization of Regulation and Permit Conditions for Regulations based on the National Safety Code (Hours of Service, NSC weight threshold);
- Cooperative Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Activities and Facilities;
- A Joint Research and Pilot Project to address common concerns with wide based super single tires.

The parties agree to explore additional areas where there are opportunities for greater cooperation which may include:

- Implementation of a scheduling system to ensure two bordering vehicle inspection stations (weigh scales) do not check the same traffic.
- Additional Joint Inspection Facilities which could be located near Alask or Lloydminster.
- The Partners in Compliance (PIC) program which recognizes carriers with an exemplary safety and compliance history. These carriers would be eligible for a pre-clearance system which would allow them to bypass weigh scales. Currently, this system exists in Alberta.

Other Provisions

NO LEGAL OR FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS CREATED:

This MOU is not a legally binding agreement, but an expression and record of the purpose and intention of the parties.

Nothing in this MOU shall be construed so as to affect the jurisdictional responsibility of either party.

Signed in __ this __ day of __, 2009

THE HONOURABLE LUKE OUELLETTE
MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

THE HONOURABLE JIM REITER
MINISTER OF HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN