The Wisconsin Truck Size and Weight Peer Panel met on December 10, 2008 in Madison. Members of the Peer Panel include John Berg, Federal Highway Administration-Wisconsin; Mark Berndt, Wilbur Smith Associates; Michael Bronzini, George Mason University; Greg Hayes, Northland College; Dan Murray American Transportation Research Institute; Cecil Selness, Minnesota Department of Transportation; and Dale Tabat, Washington State Department of Transportation. The panel is facilitated by Dr. Teresa Adams of the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s National Center for Freight and Infrastructure Research and Education. Randy Halvorson, Jim Lucht, Harry Cohen, Jason Bittner and Ernie Wittwer attended from the consultant and research team. Also attending the panel meeting were representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Division of Transportation Investment Management (Sandy Beaupre), Division of Transportation Systems Development (Rory Rhinesmith), and the Wisconsin State Patrol (Charles Lorentz). Todd Szymkowski and Peter Lynch from the University of Wisconsin’s Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory also were in attendance.

The panel reviewed the outreach activities to date, the draft final report delivered by the consultant team on December 8-9, 2008, and provided input for implementation, next steps, and recommendations. The panel provided several critical comments for consideration. To help organize the comments and input, three general categories are provided herein to identify the type of peer panel comment: minor modifications that can be completed in advance of the December 17th Advisory Committee Meeting, substantial modifications that can be available by mid-December, and substantial items requiring additional effort, data acquisition, or research work that should be included for future activities outside the scope of the January 1st 2009 report.

The industry’s level of acceptance and adoption for new equipment was raised several times throughout the meeting as was the locational impact of TS&W modifications. Other principal concerns included the availability of information specific to the bridge replacement and improvement costs, data and information on the current movements of goods to tell the economic story of increased truck sizes and weights, and the issue of commodity specific or industry specific effects. Among several other items, the peer panel requested additional information on the genesis for selected configurations for analysis.

**Key Recommendations to the Study Team:**

**Minor Modifications:**
- In the outreach section (pg. 6), text should be updated to reflect the actual number of fatal crashes involving large trucks. The current writeup listed it as 130/day.
• Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Comprehensive Safety Analysis (CSA 2010) should be reflected and referenced in the document. CSA 2010 is a comprehensive review and analysis of FMCSA’s current commercial motor vehicle safety compliance and enforcement programs.

• Report should acknowledge clearly that current exemptions are not being removed or modified as a result of the study and its recommendations.

• Include support for additional national efforts (beyond AASHTO) exploring federal changes to size and weight restrictions. This also includes recognition that until there is uniformity between states, there will be limited adoption of different equipment configurations. Certain industries will see changes, but state-specific configurations will be limited.

• Include a detailed list of the components that make up the FHWA data on costs – do these include warehouse cost changes due to larger loads, labor at the these facilities, and similar components. Panel members believe that without this information clearly shown in the report, the analysis is open for challenge.

• Review the candidate truck numbers by key commodity groups – during the panel meeting the panel heard that perhaps only 10-15% of truck trips were candidate trips. This number differs from anecdotal research.

• Text should indicate that interstate movements presented in the report for benefit/cost analysis are limited to Wisconsin-only movements. If the numbers are expanded beyond these, the benefits (transport savings) significantly increase.

• Review rail diversion cost savings graphic – the panel members specifically questioned the analysis of increased cost savings in greater rail diversion. The explanation needs to be improved to demonstrate the underlying assumption that only shippers who can gain savings divert (calculated reliability, direct savings, etc.).

• Engage WisDOT’s Programming Bureau (Joe Nestler, specifically) to double check the bridge program cost estimates.

• Map initial study objectives to final product and recommendations

Substantial Modifications (for inclusion in draft final report):

• All tables reflecting benefits/costs of selected configurations should include incremental bridge replacement costs (including costs for improved design, reductions in service life, increased inspections, phase-in costs, and similar items). By reference, Minnesota DOT has added 18 new field inspectors to properly assess the condition of its bridges as part of its phase in.

• All benefit cost tables should clearly show the public and private costs, including categorizing those borne by the carriers and shippers separately. Transport savings accrue primarily to the shippers, while some benefits may accrue to the carriers.

• Provide truck count estimates and VMT for changes from the base case for analysis. This information provides decision makers with additional information beyond aggregated payload ton-miles.

• Include detailed discussions on changes in the paper industry to reflect current market conditions.

• Improve the descriptive nature of the changing trends in the industry to better tell the story – discussion could be in terms of job creation and growth.

• Include information regarding the key state trading partners in the write-up. For instance, Wisconsin’s largest trading partner is the State of Illinois.

• With respect to truck safety, information on increased severity of crashes should be addressed. Quantification of the increased severity of crashes should be included in the analysis. (Panel members recognize that this is partially captured in the sensitivity projections, but could be better described in the text and analysis tables). One panel member expressed significant concern about the societal costs included in the Pacific Research Institute’s value of human life calculations.

• Overlay number of violations for size and weight issues graphically to identify where weight violations are most frequently observed. Identify the typical commodities that are frequently overweight.

• Include current FMCSA safety data for different truck categories.
Substantial Modifications (for follow-up work):

- Better information is needed to recommend modifications to permit fees and registration charges to reflect the actual infrastructure costs. This information could be used to bring the fee structure into alignment considering economic benefits accruing to the private sector. These private gains should be shared with the public sector agency (as in Canada). This information will set the basis for determining appropriate fees.
- Address issues related to short line rail uses for heavy goods movements and the impact of changes to the size and weight restrictions for the short lines in the state.
- Explore possibility of relevant evidence provisions to improve efficiency and effectiveness of enforcement.
- Developing incentives for carriers to adopt new technologies – for instance Minnesota previously attempted to provide relaxed weight limits in exchange for improved technologies.
- Support continued efforts for improved national or regional permitting systems

Implementation and Performance Measures Discussions:
Ernie Wittwer, CFIRE, provided an overview of this task to be completed following the initial study. The purposes of this task are to develop a method for the on-going assessment of TSW laws, establish performance measures, and recommend effective institutional approaches for administering and enforcing TSW laws and for considering future proposed changes.

Discussion highlights:
- Canada and Australia are international leaders in the development of performance based truck size and weight policies.
- Virginia DOT should be added to the list of states for review.
- The assessment should include the tool developed by the Consultant team that determines monetized benefits and costs.
- Some consideration of industry specific performance recommendations can be made in this task.
- Recommendations on organizational structure for “freight” is different than that for TS&W enforcement and implementation
- Review ATA white paper on subject authored by Darrin Roth