



CANADA—U.S. TRANSPORTATION BORDER WORKING GROUP NEWSLETTER

Issue 6 — Fall 2011

From the Desk of Co-Chair Jim Cheatham:

My predecessor, Jill Hochman used to jokingly refer to her crystal ball that she would use to report to our TBWG partners on what was happening in Washington. A crystal ball is probably a good source of information right now because trying to predict what is going to happen is anyone's guess. So many of the issues we are working on with our many transportation partners are complex and future funding to the extent it was in the pass may be a little uncertain..

The status of the Highway Reauthorization Bill appears to be moving very slowly in both houses of Congress. With all of the other critical issues that are going on in Washington, a new highway bill may not be on the immediate horizon. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee version of the transportation bill is a six-year legislation that reduces funding and makes sweeping changes to the current version of SAFETEA-LU-. In contrast, the Senate version is a two-year legislation that keeps funding at the current levels.

There has been some positive news. SAFETEA-LU has been extended for six months and that means the Coordinated Border Infrastructure Fund continues until March 31, 2012. Until both house of the U.S. Congress agrees and passes new highway legislation, we believe that our current law will continue to be extended which means that programs like the Coordinated Border Infrastructure Fund will continue to receive formula funds that will allow our state transportation partners move forward with transportation improvements at our border crossings.

We continue to work closely with our many partners in support of the International Bridge Crossing in Detroit. This project is supported by the Michigan Governor and stills needs legislation passed by the state legislature to move forward. Recently, the Michigan Governor sent new legislation to the Michigan Senate to move the project forward and the international border community is anxiously waiting for the results of that legislation. We at FHWA will continue to work cooperatively with all of the interested parties to provide the necessary expertise and technical assistance to make this project a reality.

In closing, I wanted to quickly mention the upcoming TBWG Meeting that will be held November 1 and 2, 2011 in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Our Canadian TBWG partners always do a wonderful job of hosting these meetings and our staff here at FHWA is looking forward to attending. The TBWG Meetings are an excellent way to stay connected with all the current issues that occurring in the border community.

I want to encourage all of our border partners to attend. Attending these meetings are truly the best way to keep current on all the many border issues and your presence will significantly enhance the experience.

From the Desk of Co-Chair Ted Mackay:

Greetings. I hope that you've enjoyed a happy and active summer with family and friends.

This has been an exciting year for anyone involved in Canada-US affairs and our shared border. It began with the *Beyond the Border Declaration* made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and President Barack Obama on February 4.

As part of the Beyond the Border initiative, the Government of Canada consulted with all levels of government, the private sector, community groups and non-governmental organizations, think tanks, First Nations, and border communities. You can find a summary of these consultations in the report "What Canadians Told Us: A Report on Consultations on Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness Between Canada and the United States".

We continue to work with Government of Canada partners and our US counterparts to finalize the Action Plan for a possible fall release by the Prime Minister and the President.

The TBWG continues to provide a unique and privileged forum for building on the strong Canada-US relationship and for fulfilling our mission to "facilitate the safe, secure, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods across the Canada-U.S. border."

I look forward to seeing faces, both old and new, in Niagara Falls, Ontario, November 1-2, at our upcoming TBWG Plenary. A central theme of our meeting will be how to advance the Beyond the Border initiative. I encourage your organization to participate. We are also planning a border tour of key crossings in the Niagara Frontier, including the Peace and Queenston-Lewiston Bridges, to see first-hand some of the challenges faced on the ground.

I hope to see you there!

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The Honourable Denis Lebel
Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and
Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada
for the Regions of Quebec, Riding: Roberval—Lac-Saint-
Jean (Quebec)



Minister Denis Lebel (right) and his wife Danielle (left).

Minister Denis Lebel was elected to the House of Commons for the first time in 2007, then re-elected to his seat in

the 2008 general election, at which time he was appointed Minister of State for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec. Re-elected to a third term in 2011, he is now Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities as well as Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec.

While proudly representing the citizens of the riding of Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, he has served on a number of parliamentary committees, as well as on the executive committees of the Canada-Europe and Canada-France parliamentary associations.



Prime Minister Stephen Harper (left) shown with Denis Lebel, (right) Minister of Transportation.

Minister Lebel has extensive experience in regional economic development. In addition to serving as Mayor of Roberval from 2000 to 2007, he was a member of the board of directors, executive board and forest committee of the *Union des municipalités du Québec*, chaired the *Caucus des municipalités voisines des Premières Nations* and sat on the board of directors of *Infrastructure Québec*.

Denis Lebel was also a member of the executive committee of the *Conférence régionale des élus du Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean* and chairman of *Comité de transport de la région du Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean*, as well as serving as a member of the natural resources and transportation committees.

He has also held positions as president of the *CLD du Domaine du Roy*, vice-president of the *Société d'aide au développement des collectivités Lac-Saint-Jean Ouest* and chairman of the *Association touristique régionale du Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean's* international marketing program. In addition, he served as vice-president of the *Agence régionale de santé du Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean* and a member of the air transport committee for the regions of Quebec.

Known as well for his many years of active involvement in the *Traversée internationale du Lac-Saint-Jean*, Minister Lebel intends to draw on his broad experience, attentive nature, open-mindedness and passion for regional economic development to ensure the regions of Quebec are able to carry out their entrepreneurial initiatives and to rise to their own unique challenges.

Denis Lebel and his wife, Danielle, have two children.

Border Planning Peer Exchange held in Minnesota

On April 21, 2011, the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG), sponsored a one-day peer exchange in Bloomington, Minnesota, to facilitate a discussion about border master planning among Federal, state, and regional transportation agencies from the "prairie" region along the U.S. - Canada border. The meeting was held the day after the biannual TBWG Meeting to allow participants to participate in both meetings with minimal travel costs.

In the U.S., this targeted prairie region includes Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota and eastern British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and western Ontario in Canada. The purpose of the peer exchange was to allow the participating agencies to work together and build consensus about moving forward with a potential border master plan process for the prairie states and provinces along the U.S. - Canada border.

Participants in the peer exchange included representatives from FHWA, Transport Canada, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), the International Trade Administration (ITA), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), the Eastern Border Transportation Commission (EBTC), the state Departments of Transportation (DOT) in California, Idaho, Minnesota, and North Dakota, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), and the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG).

Mr. Sergio Pallares, Chief of International Border Studies for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Ms. Cheryl Mason, Senior Project Manager for the SANDAG Service Bureau, provided an overview of the California-Baja California Border Master Plan that was finalized in September, 2008. The plan was completed in close partnership with the Secretariat of Infrastructure and Urban Development of Baja California and the U.S. - Mexico Joint Working Committee. The purpose of the master plan is to deliver a binational comprehensive approach to coordinate planning and delivery of projects at land POEs and transportation infrastructure serving those POEs in the California-Baja California region.

Mr. Gordon Rogers, Deputy Director of the Whatcom Council of Governments and Planning Director of the Whatcom Metropolitan Planning Organization in Bellingham, Washington provided the group with a presentation on the International Trade Mobility Corridor (IMTC). The IMTC is a U.S. - Canadian coalition of business and government entities that identifies and promotes improvements to mobility and security for the four border crossings that connect Whatcom County, Washington State and the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Together, these four crossings are called the Cascade Gateway.

Mr. Gordon Rogers served as the Master Moderator and guided the group through a detailed discussion on border master planning in the "prairie" region. The peer exchange's final activity was an exercise to brainstorm potential next steps in the facilitation for the collaboration and coordination efforts that will take place in the future.

The John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center was on hand to document the Peer Exchange. Mr. Jared Fijalkowski, Community Planner with the Volpe Center served as a reporter for the event and prepared a detailed white paper. To view the white paper, please visit the TBWG [Meetings Archive](#) page.



This computer produced panoramic image shows the Border Master Planning Peer Exchange participants around the table.

Scenes from the Minneapolis TBWG Meeting



Jack Olson of the North Dakota Department of Transportation and Michael Makowsky of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure presenting on the Border Master Planning Peer Exchange.



Chris Flanigan with the U.S. DOT Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration on Electronic Screening during the Technology Subcommittee Session.



Melissa Miller with the Whatcom Council of Governments presenting on Border Information Flow of Washington State and British Columbia during the Technology Subcommittee Session.



Rob Tardif with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation presenting a Border Crossing Performance Visualization Demonstration during the Technology Subcommittee Session.



David Davidson with the Border Policy Research Institute presenting on the FAST Lane Pilot during the Policy Subcommittee Session.



Daniel Lagace with the Canada Border Services Agency presenting on National Border Infrastructure Project Updates during the Border Infrastructure Coordination Subcommittee Session.



TBWG Participants listening to one of the many presentations held during the two-day session.



Dennis Counihan with the Customs and Border Protection presenting on National Border Infrastructure Project Updates during the Border Infrastructure Coordination Subcommittee Session.

Rail Peer Exchange Held in Burlington, Vermont

On May 25, 2011 the Transportation Border Working Group, in partnership with the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition (EBTC) and Whatcom Council of Governments, hosted a Cross Border Rail Peer Exchange in Burlington, Vermont at the Burlington Hilton Hotel.



The Rail Peer Exchange sought to capture the expert opinion and present analyses of current binational freight and rail operations and share these perspectives with the participants who were present at the meeting.



Participants identified current trans-border clearance levels, security practices/requirements, and discussed strategies on how to promote current and future rail initiatives that would increase the efficiency of rail service across the border. Major issues discussed included reducing transit times while maintaining security, and supporting current and new passenger and freight rail services that will enhance/expand the economic trading relationship shared by these two countries.



The peer exchange was well attended and included representatives from the Canadian Border Services Agency, Custom and Border Protections, Transport Canada, Federal Highway Administration, AMTRAK, Via Rail, Canadian National Railroad, State and Provincial Transportation Agencies, private sector and public sector rail associations, and other public and private sector stakeholders.

The expectations for the peer exchange were to identify policy and infrastructure development needed to facilitate efficient trans-border rail operations while maintaining security. These expectations were divided into two areas. First, to develop a framework for addressing existing obstacles and create a guidance document for rail projects/programs/operations related to trans-border movements to facilitate service delivery and second, to conceptualize plans to enhance/expand the usage of bi-national rail and have buy in from all participants.

Major topics covered during the peer exchange were the current State of Cross Border Initiatives relating to the future of passenger and freight rail service between Canada and the U.S., Cross Border Operations and Security, and current rail freight movement data.

After extensive discussions, the peer exchange participants recommended that a working group be established to recommend strategies that would facilitate the cross-border movement of passenger rail service in an efficient, safe and secure manner. This group should include key stakeholders, including border agencies, AMTRAK, federal, state, provincial and local transportation agencies, and other key stakeholders.

Since that meeting, the TBWG has suggested establishing a Cross-Border Passenger Rail Discussion Group which plans on reporting at the next TBWG Plenary Session in Niagara Falls, Ontario. For more information regarding the peer exchange, visit the [TBWG website](http://www.tbwg.org).

You Are Invited to the...



2011 FALL PLENARY OF THE TRANSPORTATION BORDER WORKING GROUP

**Tuesday & Wednesday
November 1 – 2, 2011**



**Meeting location and accommodations will be at the
Sheraton on the Falls Hotel in Niagara Falls, Ontario**



**Transport Canada and Federal Highway Administration
TBWG Co-Chairs invite you to the**

2011 Fall Plenary of the Transportation Border Working Group Tuesday & Wednesday, November 1 – 2, 2011

in Niagara Falls, Ontario.
Meeting location and accommodations will be at the
Sheraton on the Falls Hotel
overlooking both the Canadian and American falls.

TBWG Fall Plenary 2011

- A limited block of rooms has been allocated for the nights of October 31st & November 1st, plus a smaller block for the 2nd, at the excellent price of **\$105/night CDN Cityview or \$139/night CDN Fallsview**, single or double occupancy.
- To reserve your room, please telephone **1-800-519-9911**, and request the special **TBWG group rate**.
- Reservations must be made **before September 30, 2011**, in order to receive this special group rate.
- **Complimentary self-parking** for all overnight TBWG participants.
- To learn more about our meeting accommodations, please visit the website: <http://www.sheratononthefalls.com/>
- The meeting agenda will be forthcoming by email.

Niagara Airbus Shuttle from Airport to Niagara Falls

- This bus service picks up at Toronto Pearson International Airport and Buffalo Niagara International Airport, and drops off at our hotel. Return trips to the airports also available. Reservations are recommended.
- \$129.95 CDN from Toronto, \$137 USD from Buffalo, discounts available if booked on-line.
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