

MINUTES

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION AND COMMERCE

November 22, 2016

The Legislative Task Force on Intermodal Transportation and Commerce met at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, November 22, 2016, in Room B, MAC, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Task Force members present: Senators Eddie Joe Williams, Co-Chair; and Greg Standridge; Representatives Mike Holcomb, Co-Chair; and Marcus Richmond; Non-legislative members: Scott Bennett, Craig Christiansen, Jerry Chism, Bryan Day, Bob Freeman (by conference call) Jeff Hawkins, Gene Higginbotham, John Lipton, Butch Rice, and Kevin Sexton. Also present: Representatives Scott Baltz, David Branscum, and Micah Neal.

Senator Williams called the meeting to order.

Senator Williams and Representative Holcomb welcomed members and guests in their opening comments.

Consideration to Approve Minutes of the June 8, 2016, Meeting (Exhibit C)

Without objection, the Minutes of the June 8, 2016, meeting were approved.

Review and Discussion of the Draft Task Force Report for Submission to the Senate and House Transportation Committees [Exhibit D]

During discussion of the report, Mr. Lipton noted that Act 690 of 1997 created and established an authority for maintaining and operating Regional Intermodal Transportation Authorities (RITA's) and should be referenced as such in the final report. He questioned if all existing facilities were created under the Act to which Mr. Higginbotham replied that all of the authorities listed are Act 690 organizations. In addition, there are two newly formed organizations that were created by the Act: Central Arkansas (Conway/Perry counties) and Little River County/Ashdown which should be included in the report. The Blytheville/Mississippi County Regional Intermodal Facilities Authority and the Arkansas River Regional Intermodal Facilities Authority (Jefferson County/City of Pine Bluff) are now defunct and should be deleted.

Mr. Bennett reminded members the report contains recommendations only. If draft legislation is proposed, he recommends addressing how money/grants will be administered. He stated that in order to be successful, RITA's must have a steady stream of funding. Mr. Day also recommended ongoing funding in each budget moving forward.

Lewis Diggs, President, Southwest Arkansas Regional Intermodal Authority, said his organization has been fortunate to have some private funding, however, there is no guarantee the money will continue to come in. He said the organization has hired a part-time director; it is difficult to keep good people if there is no guaranteed source of money. Mr. Diggs recommended bringing the issue before the legislature to request a guaranteed amount of funding to be divided annually between the seven RITA's.

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The Task Force also reviewed organizational structures of various Departments of Transportation's (DOTs), all of which have highway responsibilities. DOTs are required to coordinate with other modes. Less than half of the DOTs have a commission structure. ~~Arkansas is the only state that has non-elected commissioners with 10-year terms.~~

~~Since the latter part of the previous decade, AHTD is required to submit an economic development plan under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). AHTD's ARRA Project Employment Information is included as Appendix 3. This report contains employment information from contractors that performed work on the ARRA projects.~~

Overview of Various Transportation ~~Modals~~ **Modes** & Stakeholders

Commission: 5 members appointed by the Governor ~~for 2, 4, 6, 8 and~~ **10**-year terms

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~~Trucking Industry~~ **Arkansas Trucking Association**

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Central Arkansas Intermodal Authority

- Conway and Perry Counties

Little River County Intermodal Authority

- Little River County

- Ashdown

~~Blytheville/Mississippi County Regional Intermodal Facilities Authority~~

~~Mississippi County/City of Blytheville~~

~~Arkansas River Regional Intermodal Facilities Authority~~

~~Jefferson County/City of Pine Bluff~~

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2. Provide ~~\$125,000~~ **\$75,000** per year in funding for each of seven Regional Intermodal Transportation Authorities (RITAs) (~~\$500,000~~ **\$525,000** per year total)

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4. ~~Enhance coordination with other transportation modals~~

5. ~~Create subcommittees of the Senate Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs and the House Public Transportation Committees~~

~~subcommittee would meet jointly~~ **Legislative Transportation Committees** monitor abandoned rail lines in the state and determine if the state should purchase the abandoned rail to preserve future economic development opportunities.

6. ~~Create an Intermodal Jump Start program~~

~~provide funding of \$1.2 million annually over a two-year period to be divided equally between the regional intermodal authorities in the state. Program funding could pass through the Arkansas Waterways Commission. Intermodal Authorities would be required to provide quarterly reports and make an annual presentation to the Transportation Committees detailing the expenditure of funds.~~

~~Arkansas is a *Bridge State* meaning that most of the users on Arkansas's highway systems are just passing through.~~

Senator Williams advised that staff will revise the report to include the recommended changes/additions and forward to members within the next 10 days for approval. The Task Force will meet briefly in December to amend/accept the final report and upon approval, Task Force members will present its findings and recommendations at a meeting of the House Committee on Public Transportation and the Senate Committee on Public Transportation, Technology, and Legislative Affairs, as required by Act 166 of 2015

Senator Williams stated that without objection, the report will reflect the above changes as presented.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.