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2014 Biennial Report on Progress in the Expansion and the Operation of Regional Overdimensional and Overweight Permit Agreements

Maine Department of Transportation

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Memorandum

To: Senator Ed Mazurek
Representative Ken Theriault
Members of the Joint Standing Committee
on Transportation



MaineDOT

From: Nina A. Fisher, Legislative Liaison

Date: April 3, 2014

Re: Overdimensional and Overweight Permit Agreements

29-A, §2384, sec. 6 requires the commissioner of MaineDOT to submit a biennial report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters outlining the progress in the expansion and the operation of the regional overdimensional and overweight permit agreements.

History

In the early 1980's, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont formed the New England Transportation Consortium (NETC) to work on regional transportation issues. One of the first projects selected was the creation of an oversize/overweight issuance program to standardize and streamline the permit process. The NETC permit provided for a uniform set of safety rules; an envelope vehicle moving on a designated highway system; and the issuing state concept. Under the issuing state concept, one state (usually the destination state) issues a single permit on behalf of all travel states. The issuing state routed the trip, and collected all affected states' permit fees. Monthly, each NETC state transmitted the permit data and fees to the other four states.

Maine typically issued approximately 3,000 multistate permits each year. This compares to about 24,000 to 30,000 total permits annually. The NETC permit program generally did expedite permit issuance, however, routing often was an issue. Each NETC state was required to inform the other member states of any permanent or temporary route restrictions, including restrictions access routes to the designated system. This essentially was a paper process, and communications sometimes was spotty.

As states developed more and better online tools for the issuance of permits, the need for single issuing state lessened. Citing concerns over routing, in 2013 Massachusetts withdrew from the NETC permit process. Rhode Island effectively had stopped NETC participation several years ago. Although Maine did not receive official notification from VT that they had pulled out of the NETC, they did post an official withdrawal from the NETC as of November 1, 2013 on their website. New Hampshire has indicated that as long as Maine was willing to continue to issue permits for NH, they would do the same for Maine. NETC is down to Maine and New Hampshire.

The NETC's common safety elements remain in effect. Tracking and communicating route restrictions remains an issue even for the issuance on Maine-only permits.

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