



Transportation & Technology Advisory Committee
Wednesday July 6, 2010 1:00 p.m.
General Assembly Building, 6th Floor, Speaker's Conference Room

- Call to Order; Roll Call

The chairman called the meeting to order.

- Overview of Advisory Committee

Staff discussed how the advisory committees operate. In particular, the transportation advisory committee has been asked to review the current emissions testing process in Virginia.

Chairman Rust made opening remarks regarding the emissions testing process. The task of this advisory committee is to come up with some recommendations to the full committee, which could potentially become legislation introduced during the 2012 Session of the General Assembly, depending on the work of the advisory committee.

Also, the chairman mentioned that distracted driving has been an issue raised in the most recent General Assembly session, in particular with regard to the use of cell phones and texting with cell phones while driving. Delegate Joe T. May, chairman of JCOTS, requested that the Advisory Committee also review and make recommendations regarding this issue.

- DEQ Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program Stakeholders Group

Angie Jenkins, Director of Policy at the Department of Environmental Quality provided the committee with information regarding a stakeholder group that was formed at the request of the chairman of the House Committee on Transportation to review the vehicle emissions inspection program, including the use of remote emissions testing. As part of its plan to address the Environmental Protection Agency's standards for air quality, Virginia has instituted an inspection/maintenance program, requiring vehicle emissions inspections every 2 years for vehicles registered in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads. Currently, owners take their vehicles to a certified inspection station. Information collected at the vehicle inspection is then transmitted to DEQ and to the DMV. Vehicles that pass inspection are eligible for registration. Since 2006, a remote sensing component has been available in Northern Virginia, in addition to the on-site station inspection stations.

Two bills were introduced during the 2011 General Assembly that would expand the use of remote vehicle inspection program. Those bills were withdrawn by the patrons and sent for further study to JCOTS and DEQ. A group of stakeholders, including representatives of

inspection stations, remote sensing companies, consumers, and other interested groups, has been organized to come up with recommendations present to the Joint Commission on Transportation by November of 2011. The first meeting was held on June 13, with the next scheduled for July 12. The stakeholders hope to complete their work by end of the summer and provide their recommendation by that time.

Following the presentation, the committee chairman determined that, because DEQ has a stakeholder group already looking into the issue, the advisory committee will wait to review the their recommendations and proceed from there.

- **Remote Emissions Testing Technology**

Drew Rau, Remote Sensing Manager at Environmental Systems Products provided a presentation that included an overview of remote sensing technology. The presentation is available on the JCOTS website.

Remote sensing does not require motorists to stop or slow down during testing. They are not required to take their vehicles to an inspection station. Some form of remote sensing is currently used in 25 states, as well as in some international locations. Mr. Rau also informed the committee that the technology has been vetted and tested among other inspection technologies and has been found to be very accurate. The program is also popular with citizens of other states where it is available, including Colorado. Regarding privacy considerations, remote sensing is already currently happening in Northern Virginia. Precautions are taken to ensure that any private data that may be collected is not misused.

The chair opened the floor for questions from the audience, but none were taken.

- **Distracted Driving Legislation in Virginia & Other States**
 - JCOTS Staff

Staff summarized all of the bills that had been introduced in the 2011 General Assembly regarding the use of cell phones in one form or another while driving. Staff also presented to the committee on the trends in distracted driving legislation around the country, including information regarding studies that have been conducted on the topic. The trend among the states is to make text messaging while driving a primary offense. Of particular interest to the committee was a law enacted in Maine directed at distracted driving generally, and not just at cell phone usage or texting.

- **Discussion & Formulation of Work Plan for Future Meetings**

While awaiting the results of the stakeholder recommendations to the Joint Commission on Transportation, the committee members agreed that they would like to consider further the issue of text messaging while driving. Staff were asked to do more research on distracted driving in general for the next meeting.

Staff will send out dates for the next meeting to occur in the fall, coordinating with DEQ to set a meeting shortly after their proposals have been finalized. The meeting was adjourned.