

# **Oklahoma Road User Charge (RUC) Task Force Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, August 31st, 2022

## **Call to Order**

The Oklahoma Road User Charge (RUC) Task Force was called to order at 10:32am by Sec. Tim Gatz.

## **Legislative Update – Secretary Tim Gatz**

Sec. Gatz opened with comments about the US DOT Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg’s recent visit to our state. During the visit Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg gave high praise of the work done at ODOT in regards to charging stations, the NEVI program, electric vehicles and on the grant proposal.

## **Roll Call**

### **Task Force Members Present**

Chairman Tim Gatz, Rep. Brian Hill, Scott Minton, Jim Newport, Lyle Walters, John Sharp (proxy for Mark Sweeney), Nicole King (proxy for Todd Hiatt) and Jessica Grogis (present after roll call).

### **Task Force Members Absent**

Rich Brierre, Caden Cleveland, Mike Fina, Jonathan Fowler, Sen. John Haste, Michael Lynn, and Chris Schroder.

Guest attendees from our state legislature were Sen. Michael Bergstrom and Rep. Nicole Miller.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes approved for June 15, 2022 meeting.

## **Pilot Program Update – Russell Hulin**

Mr. Hulin, RUC pilot program advisor, provided an update on the Federal grant proposal. The grant application is still being reviewed and there is no indication yet of when the grant will be awarded. Mr. Hulin then presented slides on recent factors causing fuel tax decline.

## **Questions & Open Discussion**

Rep. Hill asked if there was any indication that California will not allow combustion engines across their state lines or if there will be any requirements for cross-state traffic. Mr. Hulin answered that the mandate he mentioned only applies to dealerships selling new vehicles inside the boundary of the state of California. He added in the beginning of 2035, 100% of new model year sales must be electric vehicles and no new fuel stations will be allowed. Rep. Hill stated he recently met with an industry leader who mentioned there will be 34 new EV models in 2023. Sec. Gatz stated that the influx of automobile manufacturer’s running commercials for EV’s presents the future realities of our future. Challenges with the electrical grid will materialize. Oklahoma is doing the right work for right now for our state. Our NEVI submittal described our plan to provide access to the \$63 million set aside for IJA for Electric Vehicle charging stations. We will pursue other grant opportunities working with our private sector partners.

### **Presentation – Mr. Kary Witt**

Mr. Witt, RUC Pilot manager from HNTB presented on the Oklahoma Road User Charge Program and HB1712. Mr. Witt talked about the purpose of the program and how it would be structured. He stated the team is waiting to hear if the STFSTA Grant application submitted in November for \$1.9 million will be awarded.

Sec. Gatz reaffirmed the commitment that the pilot work will continue whether we receive the Federal grant monies or not.

Mr. Witt introduced the team members involved in structuring and implementing the program and each spoke briefly about the areas they will be focusing on.

Mike Patterson, VP, DOT Nat'l Practice Consultant/HNTB – Policy framework, Tribal nation participation  
Walter Fagerlund, VP, Director, National Toll Technology/HNTB – Road User Charge Fee collection  
Brenda Barwick, President/Jones PR – Public and Stakeholder engagement  
Diane Newton, PMP, Associate VP/HNTB – Planning, design and implementation of pilots

### **Questions & Open Discussion**

Sec. Gatz emphasized a few points on the financial aspect including using the term 'revenue replacement' as opposed to taxation opportunity and that the goal is how to replace the revenue loss and to be mindful of the cost of collection as we transition to some other form of revenue replacement and to not price ourselves out of an opportunity in doing so. The last point was to be focused on a clear understanding of how our citizenry is using the transportation systems, to contribute to investment levels fairly and accordingly, and maintain privacy.

Rep. Hill reiterated the same concerns about not increasing taxes, and the protection of people's privacy.

Mr. Newport shared some statistics on behalf of the trucking industry. He stated that the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) did an analysis indicating that 45% of the road user charge taxes collected are paid by trucking. The trucking industry represents 14% of the vehicle miles traveled and there are concerns about the cost of third-party data collection which takes away from the cost of roads and bridges.

### **Presentation – Mr. Arya Rohani**

Sec. Gatz introduced Arya Rohani from HNTB for his presentation on Telematics. Before slides were presented, Mr. Rohani commended the Oklahoma road charge user program, that it was a nationally significant project and other states will follow our lead. It will be a fast-paced project with a 16-month timeline.

### **Questions & Open Discussion**

Sen. Bergstrom also expressed the concerns of privacy, additional costs for truckers, individuals and families, how to find revenue replacement to fund our roads and bridges. He voiced his concern for the increase in accidents since 2019 and the possibility for the increase in fatalities due to the weight and increased horsepower of electric vehicles.

Sec. Gatz said the different perspectives raised are important to consider and that the biggest challenge for the next couple of decades is how to manage the variety types of traffic intermingled on our transportation system. Autonomous vehicles, EV's connected to telematics, and those who do not have the technology. The more we rely on our vehicles to make decisions for us, the less effective we will be as drivers. Sec. Gatz said he is optimistic Oklahoma will find an exceptional model however.

**Closing**

Sec. Gatz expressed appreciation for the team members and for the work being done. He mentioned all should be cognizant of the aggressive schedule and timeline but believes a good product will come out of it that will fit the needs of our state.

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:55am.**

**Attachment(s):**

Presentations:

- Presentation on Factors Accelerating Fuel Tax Decline
- Oklahoma RUC Program Project Update – Kary Witt, RUC Pilot Manager & Others - HNTB Corp.
- RUC and Telematics – Arya Rohani, PE, National Practice Leader – HNTB Corp.

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Signed by:



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Tim J. Gatz

09/26/2022

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Date