

# **Oklahoma Road User Charge (RUC) Task Force meeting**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, June 22, 2023

### **Call to Order**

The Oklahoma Road User Charge (RUC) Task Force meeting was called to order at 2:33pm.

### **Roll Call**

**Task Force Members Present** were Jim Newport, Michael Lynn, Rep. Brian Hill, Todd Hiatt (Proxy – Mark Willingham), Chris Schroder (Proxy-Randy Robinson), Mark Sweeney (Proxy – John Sharp), Mike Fina, Rich Brierre and Scott Minton.

**Task Force Members Absent** were Jessica Grogis, Jonathan Fowler, Caden Cleveland, and Sen. John Haste

### **Approval of Minutes**

Approval for the minutes from the March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting.

ACTION: Newport moved and Brierre seconded that the minutes be approved as presented.

MOTION: Carried by the following Vote:

AYES: Newport, Lynn, Hill, Hiatt (Willingham), Schroder (Robinson), Sweeney (Sharp), Fina, and Brierre.

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Grogis, Fowler, Cleveland, Haste and Minton.

### **Update on “Fair Miles Oklahoma” (Pay-per-Mile) Pilot**

Chairman Gatz recognized Russell Hulin to introduce presenters. After a brief overview of the agenda, Mr. Hulin introduced Mr. Witt.

### **Presentation – Kary Witt (HNTB), Jee Kim (Gannett Fleming) and Scott Jacobs (Emovis)**

#### **Update on “Fair Miles Oklahoma” (Pay-per-Mile) Pilot**

Mr. Witt reported that significant progress had been made and the road map concept presented 12 weeks ago is now a reality. As of May 15<sup>th</sup>, a working pay-per-mile pilot exists in the State of Oklahoma. Presentations were given to various community, government and transportation groups while Jones PR engaged with the community at Auto Shows. Mr. Witt stated that the demographic mix of those participating is very good. Over a thousand people provided email addresses in initial sign-ups, and 450+ have provided their vehicle information. This active pipeline will hopefully become full participation in the pilot program. At this time, 52 of the 77 counties in Oklahoma are represented. Targeted recruitment is being done in the counties with no participants. Mr. Witt walked the task force through the sign-up and survey portions describing the participant experience. He further explained that incentives to complete short surveys are offered throughout the program and participants would be receive gift cards after completion of each/all surveys.

Ms. Kim (Gannett Fleming) briefed the task force about the enrollment process since May 15<sup>th</sup> and described the enrolling and onboarding process. Ms. Kim also presented a dashboard showing the current number of participants, vehicle models and mileage collection methods. 198 accounts have been opened as of June 22, 2023. Ms. Kim showed a mock invoice that each participant will receive. Emovis is providing daily reporting to keep the project team up to date on the status of the pilot. Ad Hoc reports can be provided as needed, and at the end of the pilot, results and statistics reports will also be available.

Mr. Witt (HNTB) closed with an appeal to those in the task force who have not yet signed up for the pilot to please do so, and to also please encourage those in your household, any friends, family, or neighbors to participate as well.

### **Questions & Open Discussion**

Mr. Greenawalt asked how often is the GPS system pinged, and if continual, how is the collection of that amount of data addressed? Mr. Jacobs (Emovis) answered that the GPS is not pinging constantly. The reader is computing the miles using vehicle speed sensors and course overground when the vehicle is moving or stopped. When the vehicle stops, it computes the data and uses it in conjunction with GPS location data. When the next trip is complete it forwards the first trip information over.

Mr. Hulin added that once participants get logged into their account, they will see their mileage update total which updates daily and is displayed in a bar graph. Mr. Hulin stated the ease of the OBD plugin GPS-enabled device, taking one odometer photo, and not having to worry about anything after that was ideal. Mr. Hulin asked Mr. Jacobs what is the oldest model that the plug-in device will work on. Mr. Jacobs stated the requirements that vehicles have to have an OBD-2 compatible board was implemented in 1996 so if the vehicle is newer than a '96 then it has to have the port unless it is an electric vehicle.

Mr. Hulin stated some of the insurance companies provide the same device (or similar) to their customers as an opportunity to save money on their auto insurance so if you already have an OBD device plugged in then you would have to choose another vehicle reporting method when signing up for the pilot.

Mr. Lynn mentioned he had some issues with the sign-up emails: overlooking and/or deleting them due to not knowing they were for the Fair Miles pilot as all came from unrecognizable domains. He also mentioned he signed up with more than one vehicle and the behavior of the device (green flashing light) concerned him and is different between each vehicle. Lastly, Mr. Lynn said he struggled with getting his wife's vehicle account 'active'.

Mr. Hulin acknowledged that there have been some issues with emails going to spam and stated some of those communications not getting through may be the reason some of the final sign-ups haven't occurred.

Ms. Sullivan stated that after the task force meets today, folks from Gannett-Fleming, Emovis and HNTB, will be meeting to discuss some improvements to be made including on the communication emails. She also had some feedback to share about her sign-up process on her cell phone app.

Mr. Witt noted that this type of dialogue is exactly what should happen when doing a pilot and is the whole point for doing a pilot. There will be triumphs and failures and the specific feedback given today and in the future is being used to improve the experience.

Mr. Gatz asked Mr. Witt that when one is having trouble with the plug-in module, is there a way to provide feedback and get a replacement for devices that might be defective.

Mr. Witt said it does happen and there is a support line with representatives to help walk folks through the trouble-shooting steps and if that fails, they will work with participant on an alternative mileage reporting option (the mobile app, manual reporting, etc.)

### **Overview of Non-Pilot Task Force Duties & Projected Timelines**

Mr. Witt reminded task force members that this group and pilot formed in response to a legislative mandate and a number of questions the legislature had about road user charging or pay-per-mile charging will be

answered through the pilot, but some will not. Some items are well on their way but also being developed is a policy framework. Some of the questions being asked that we will have to answer are what are the pros and cons of a RUC or pay per mile program, what are the financial aspects, is it just lost revenue needing to be replaced or fully funding programs on into the future, how much does Oklahoma want the road user charge program to operate and generate. An analysis was done which showed that 1 cent per mile is pretty close to a direct replacement for the revenue that's currently being collected. Other funding alternatives are also being looked at in case road user charge isn't the direction the state wants to go. The federal government granted 1.9 million for the cost of the pilot and one priority is to look at possibly using the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (who already collects tolls) and leverage their existing back office to do some of the functions done by a commercial account manager (Emovis) – not just a question on which is more efficient or cost-saving, but is that function best left with the private sector.

Mr. Witt stated that they are also looking at how to charge those driving through the state and since those vehicles certainly have an impact on the wear and tear of our highways, asks is it fair to charge them. Interstate tolling agreements with surrounding states could possibly be used as a model. Discussions will also be taking place regarding tribal nations who get a share through compacts with the state are stakeholders and are impacted by the decline in fuel tax revenue. Mr. Witt also said concerns will be addressed of data management privacy piece. A final report is already being formulated and the final report and summary is due to the Oklahoma legislature by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, and in the Spring, a pretty comprehensive report that will be a post-evaluation to the FHWA in their agreement to fund a large part of this project. Lastly, Mr. Witt said the pilot is about half-way through and on target to meet deadlines.

Mr. Hulin turned the meeting back over to Mr. Gatz.

Mr. Gatz said he was pleased with how things were going so far. He encouraged task force members to sign-up if they haven't already. Mr. Gatz also stated he appreciated the interaction today, including Mr. Lynn's feedback and experience.

### **Open Discussion**

Mr. Willingham stated that Oklahoma had recently registered 17 Class-8 large commercial electric trucks since our last task force meeting so the necessity of this task force really comes into focus.

Mr. Newport noted that a mandate is coming and in 2035-2040 California plans to have zero emissions but doesn't see how enough Class-8 commercial motor vehicles could be produced to replace them all in time. Mr. Newport also raised concerns of the electric grid and the non-existent charging infrastructure in a state (California) known for its blackouts and rolling brownouts. He further stated the infrastructure is not there to support the capacity for commercial vehicles.

Mr. Gatz stated he appreciated the perspective Mr. Newport brings and noted the importance of recognizing that the state recently committed and submitted a request for hydrogen as an alternative fuel in the state.

Rep. Hill commented on the volume of EV box vehicles out delivering packages now which is lost revenue. He stated that efficiencies are increasing and impacting our state and so this pilot is proving more daily how it is important to stay committed to try and figure out what the next steps will look like.

Mr. Patterson added some targeted marketing was recently sent out in some of the areas where participation in the pilot was lacking.

Mr. Newport clarified some of the comments he made earlier and said hopefully good policy comes out of the pilot (and these discussions) because that is what it's really about. He said Oklahoma is ahead of the curve and it is a time to borrow from other states to make even better policy than those other states.

### **Closing Remarks**

Chairman Gatz thanked the task force members for their time and participation. He echoed his earlier comments to sign up for the pilot if not already and any feedback is welcomed.

ACTION: Lynn moved and Newport seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

MOTION: Carried by the following Vote:

AYES: Newport, Lynn, Hill, Hiatt (Willingham), Schroder (Robinson), Sweeney (Sharp), Fina, and Brierre.

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Grogis, Fowler, Cleveland, Haste.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.**

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Approval of Minutes:



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Tim J. Gatz - Chairman