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SYMPOSIUM ON MILEAGE-BASED USER FEES: TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

Lunch Address: A National Perspective: The Mileage-Based User Fee Alliance (MBUFA)

Introduction: Lee W. Munnich, Jr., Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

AASHTO represents state DOTs, ITSA focuses on technology, IBTTA on tolling, etc. In representing their own interests, these groups represent some aspects of MBUF, but none of them specifically represent the interests of MBUF. In 2010, we recognized the need for such an organization that could interface with these related groups and work particularly on MBUF outreach and education. Congress and state legislators were requesting MBUF information, and if a project was not ongoing in a particular state, it was likely not being well communicated there. MBUFA is the membership organization that was formed to meet these needs.

Speaker: Barbara Rohde, MBUFA
[“MBUFA: Mileage-Based User Fee Alliance”](#)

In April of 2010, Jack Basso and Barbara Rohde recognized the need for a united voice talking on the MBUF issue, both at the federal and the state level. MBUFA was the result, and many in the audience today are members.

Having worked at both the federal and state level, Rohde knows what drives legislators and what stops them. She indicated that the MBUFA alliance can move this issue along.

Slide 3 – About Us

MBUFA was just designated as a 501(c)3. The organization has moved very quickly in only 2.5 years. MBUFA’s first meeting was in September 2010.

Slide 4 – Goals

MBUFA’s goals are the same as that who are in attendance at the annual MBUF Symposia.

Slide 5 – E-Newsletter

MBUFA publishes a newsletter and Rohde encouraged Symposium attendees to sign up. Jack Basso is MBUFA’s Chair, Jim Whitty, Vice Chair and Lee Munnich, Secretary-Treasurer.

Slide 6 – Transportation Finance Crossroads

What is happening at the federal level and around the states? The House Budget Committee is doing a hearing today on transportation finance. It is the first time in two years that this has happened, and whenever transportation finance is discussed on the Hill, MBUF always comes up; but when policy makers talk about the issue, the information they are discussing is out of date – it is a rapidly changing environment.

Symposium on Mileage-Based User Fees • Nashville, TN • April 24, 2013

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Slide 7 – Pilots and Studies

When MBUFA began two and a half years ago, a maximum of five states were looking into MBUF. With West Virginia just introducing legislation, now there are 18 states plus New York City considering MBUF.

Slide 8 – Federal Outlook – Moving Forward

The Federal outlook is moving forward:

- In December 2012, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) introduced a bill (H.R. 6662) that would require the Treasury Department to study the viability of raising new federal highway funds by taxing cars for each mile they drive.
- A GAO Report was issued in December 2012: “Mileage Fees Could Be More Equitable and Efficient than Gas Tax.”
- Bill Schuster, new chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has sounded very positive about MBUF, saying, “There will be a shorter-term fix, but long term, vehicle miles traveled may be the only way to stop the decline.”

Slide 9 – Member Engagement

MBUFA has talked to a lot of transportation groups in Washington about what we should be doing. MBUFA was contacted in January 2011 from a senate staffer asking if Congress allocated \$300 million, could MBUFA find six states willing to do pilots?

MBUFA gets many requests from the press. They don’t understand MBUF issues and have a lot of misinformation. MBUFA’s new website helps address this.

Last year, most see the loss of the \$60M (\$30M per year placed in the House bill of MAP-21 for planning and trials) as very difficult. But we have never seen that amount of money put into a bill in 18 months, so that shows that there is great interest.

MBUFA briefed the House committees and they asked MBUFA to speak to the 50 Tea Party freshman members. It turned out positively; MBUFA was able to speak to every Senate and House office. Unfortunately the bill was pulled, at a point in the process which had never been seen before. There was discussion of a large conservative vote against the bill, and the vote was already going to be very close in the House. So instead of losing the bill, MBUF funding was removed from it.

Slide 10 – New Website

MBUFA’s new website, <http://mbufa.org/>, is getting activity, with the most hits on the myths and facts section.

Slide 11 – New Member Engagement

Looking ahead to what will be going on in the next year, it is very critical both on the state and federal level. MBUFA has been asked to sponsor workshops at the state level so states can bring all their people from their state DOT and others who can’t travel long distances and MBUFA can bring in experts in MBUFs and other experts around the Hill.

MBUFA will begin webinars in June on various road user charging topics.

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MBUFA has always had quarterly meetings, but will sponsor roundtable events with staff and members from the House Ways and Means Committee, Senate Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and other policy makers so MBUFA leadership can discuss with them all the myths and benefits with MBUF.

Press inquiries to MBUFA are significant and often require information on a short lead time. Adrian Moore, MBUFA's communications person, and Jim Whitty address these.

Bruce Shollar (Deputy Director of Transportation for NYC) requested MBUFA to begin working with the General Services Administration (GSA). Their approval process on technology takes 18-24 months, so MBUFA will start working with GSA now to get approvals ready for technology that can be used in future trials.

Slide 12 – Role Models for MBUF

The potential of MBUF to move national policy is similar to the impact of other issues Rodhe has previously worked on. These issues also moved national policy: school choice, welfare to work, the smoking/health issue, and sales tax for mail order.