

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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## **Meeting Notes**

### **FREIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE**

**DATE:** November 5, 2009

**TIME:** 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Maryland Food Center Authority TOUR

**CHAIR:** Rick Crawford, Baltimore Regional Transportation Board Freight Movement Task Force chaired the Joint BRTB-TPB Freight Subcommittee meeting

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

Rick Crawford, Norfolk Southern  
Randall Carroll, Maryland Department of Environment  
Jim Dwyer, Ports of Baltimore  
Richard Easley, E-squared Engineering  
Anne Ferro, Maryland Motor Truck Administration  
Lee Foster, Foster Travel Publishing  
Steven Hawtof, Gannett Fleming  
Terry Levinson, Argonne National Laboratory  
Murat Omay, Sabra-Wang Consulting  
Armand Patella, Pi Corp  
John Rotz, Maryland State Highway Administration  
Jon Scherman, Cambridge Systematics  
Paul Silberman, Sabra-Wang Consulting  
Terri Tabesh, Maryland State Highway Administration  
Porter Wheeler, Maryland Transportation Authority  
Luke Wisniewski, Maryland Department of Environment

#### **COG/BMC STAFF ATTENDANCE:**

Bala Akundi, Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
Jennifer Desimone, COG  
Michael Farrell, COG  
Karin Foster, COG  
Andrew Meese, COG  
Sara Tomlinson, Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
Patrick Zilliacus, COG

**Rick Crawford, Norfolk Southern Railroad**—Mr. Crawford welcomed attendees and asked for introductions. Following introductions, he turned the floor over to the Don Darnall, the Executive Director of the Maryland Food Center Authority.

**Don Darnall, Maryland Food Center Authority (MFCA)**—The MFCA is a quasi-state operation. It was created by an act of the Maryland legislature in 1967. Its Jessup location was intentionally chosen as a central Mid-Atlantic spot for food distribution to the region. Its market share spans beyond the Baltimore-Washington region as far south as Richmond, VA and north as Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, PA. It operates currently under a covenant that expires in 2020. Mr. Darnall noted that the MFCA would like to make infrastructure improvements and expand the number of enclosed loading docks, but it is a matter of financial resources available to develop the facilities. All development decisions on the property must come to the MFCA board for approval. The MFCA is made up of numerous warehouses leased out to food vendors. The leasers prepare and package food for delivery to stores such as Giant and Safeway. The MFCA also has a retail market where leasers can sell to wholesalers and consumers directly on the property. The retail market is centrally located to prevent customer contamination of the individual food warehouses across the large complex. Mr. Darnall raised bioterrorism as a concern and therefore security and contamination issues on the property are taken very seriously. Most transportation moves are made by truck, rail is less competitive and not as accessible everywhere on the facility. The number of truck trips per day driving in and out of the MFCA can range from 1,500 to 3,000 depending on the season, holiday, day of the week, etc.

#### **NAFCO Wholesale Fish Dealers**

NAFCO is one of several wholesale seafood distributors at the MFCA. NAFCO is the largest regional seafood distributor in the Mid-Atlantic, serving retail chains and institutional distributors with a full line of fresh, frozen, canned, smoked, salted, and live seafood throughout a territory extending from Connecticut to Richmond, VA. Many of the foreign fish come in air cargo to Dulles International Airport or Thurgood Marshall Baltimore-Washington International Airport. Forty to fifty percent of these fish are farmed raised in oceans abroad, however, they have no farm raised fish from the United States. Our guide explained that truckers must be cautious about being overweight when they haul the 50,000 pound air cargo containers to the MFCA. NAFCO supplies Safeways and Giants and other locations with major “density drops.” When it comes to pricing, NAFCO prices by the month. If a sudden expense occurs such as a rise in gas price near the beginning of the month, NAFCO must take on the price. NAFCO workers are not unionized and as our guide described, work is available for the young and strong.

#### **Cooseman’s DC Inc**

Cooseman’s market is specialty produce, primarily herbs such as dill, rosemary, basil, chives, and sage. The herbs are sourced from Mexico, Columbia, and Hawaii, to name some examples. Herbs have short life spans and must be transported quickly. Herbs are delivered as air cargo to New York John F. Kennedy Airport, Dulles International Airport, Thurgood Marshall Baltimore-Washington International Airport, and Miami International Airport and then trucked to Cooseman’s for packaging and delivery. Sixty to seventy percent of their product is organic and regular inspections are made to the farms abroad from which they source their product. Cooseman’s herbs react to the

demand ebb and flow. For example, holidays, particularly Thanksgiving, is a “retail holiday” where families tend to prepare their own meals with ingredients such as herbs purchased at the grocery store. This makes for some of the busiest times of the year at Cooseman’s. Giant and Safeway are some of Cooseman’s largest buyers.

**Roundtable Updates—**

- At the end of the tour, the meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting January 28, 2009**