

**Governor's Logistics Task Force
Commerce Subcommittee Meeting**

**NC Farm Bureau Federation
Raleigh, NC
July 26, 2011**

Minutes

Chairman Larry Wooten called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Additional subcommittee members in attendance were Nelson Cole, Jake Cashion, and Senator Michael Walters. Also attending the meeting were Seth Palmer and Charlie Diehl.

Chairman Wooten, Jake Cashion and the subcommittee discussed the recent Maritime Strategies Study meeting in Greensboro, and the helpful information shared there on ports issues. One important message from shipping companies was that import/export balance with containers is important. Incoming container business is crucial to being able to export products with containers.

Senator Walters recounted the strong points on ports issues that NC Department of Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler shared at the Governor's Logistics Task Force meeting in Morehead City.

Mr. Cole suggested and the subcommittee concurred that a more intense marketing strategy is needed for North Carolina's ports. Seth Palmer reported that Roberto Canales and Jed McMillan are meeting with NC State Ports Authority personnel today, and that the DOT transition process will very likely impact marketing strategies. Chairman Wooten stated that this subcommittee can recommend that the NCSPA strengthen its marketing of NC ports to NC businesses, especially letting companies know about growing or planned business parks that could help them utilize the ports. Port access infrastructure in other states should be examined to assist North Carolina planning and development.

The subcommittee and staff discussed how the transition will enable the NCSPA to maintain the strengths and advantages that come with being an authority, while also benefitting from the oversight and management structure of the DOT.

Members commented on the need for the State and its ports to capitalize on existing strengths – agriculture, forestry, military – while still recognizing other diverse sectors and building opportunities growth. A pie chart is needed to show relative business sectors based on their percentage of the State’s economy. This would be help to visualize connectivity among the sectors and possibly expose any missing pieces.

Members suggested a subcommittee recommendation that all rail operators (Class 1’s and short lines) have open access to the North Carolina Railroad to better move freight in the State. North Carolina needs to be a full-traffic corridor with both rail and highway infrastructure developed for full access to both ports to maximize utilization.

The subcommittee discussed recommending the exploration of creative funding opportunities for freight transportation. For instance, does new Mobility Fund language potentially create a new opportunity for Morehead City and Wilmington to improve port access through newly available loop funds? Members discussed the “first mile” challenges in Wilmington and the need for an access bridge. Highway prioritization should consider freight movement and not just moving people, and weight issues should be studied. Federal and other states’ trucking laws should be examined to enable cohesion where practicable.

Members discussed passenger rail service and how it impacts commerce, recommending that it needs to should be considered in future planning.

The subcommittee also recommended that support should be given for lengthening the runway at Murphy-Andrews Airport to 7,000 feet in order to support tourism in Western North Carolina, enhance Forestry Service fire-fighting capabilities, and provide emergency relief for Atlanta Hartsfield Airport.

Discussion took place on the upcoming Maritime Study stakeholders meeting on August 10th, and how that work relates to the work of the Governor’s Logistics Task Force and this subcommittee.

The next Commerce Subcommittee meeting will likely take place via conference call.

The meeting was adjourned.