

Transport Topics **Online**

Updated:

ATA Leaders Set Policies on HOS, Alternative Fuels

By Sean McNally, Senior Reporter

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LAS VEGAS — The leadership of American Trucking Associations addressed several policy issues here during the group's annual conference, ranging from the supporting documents fleets need to provide for hours-of-service compliance to what alternative fuels are used in the nation.

"There was nothing that you'd call a major policy development, but in a time when all the issues are complex and can quickly change, we got a lot of great input from the members on where they want to see us advocating up on Capitol Hill," ATA President Bill Graves told Transport Topics at the conclusion of this year's Management Conference & Exhibition.

Graves specifically highlighted some "further clarification and direction on how to handle the supporting documents issue for hours of service."

"It was just simply an affirmation that our members are very concerned that [the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration] has yet to publish a proposed rulemaking on what it is you have to maintain and have available for a safety audit relative to hours of service," he said.

Graves said, "We've decided to take our case to FMCSA." He said the group would seek to share its concerns with the new administrator, but would "still reserve the right . . . to take some form of legal action against FMCSA if we can't get it resolved in perhaps a more friendly manner."

Acting FMCSA Administrator Rose McMurray said during an interview at MCE that while the agency "continues to work on this HOS supporting docs rule . . . there's a lot on our plate."

In addition, the overall hours-of-service rule is still under legal challenge. McMurray said that a court decision "would help clarify our next steps on that — but that does not stop us from continuing to work on that rule."

ATA members also "reaffirmed the industry's commitment to using alternative fuels on a voluntary basis," ATA Regulatory Counsel Rich Moskowitz said.

Specifically, the policy dealt with natural gas.

Moskowitz said that while the fuel remains "a viable alternative for certain segments of our industry," cost and infrastructure obstacles will require "financial incentives to encourage natural gas trucks."

In addition, the members reaffirmed their commitment to the voluntary use of safety technology.

Barbara Windsor, first vice chairwoman of ATA and chairwoman of the federation's safety task force, said members voiced that "any additional [safety] equipment that's put on is on a voluntary basis and that we believe that it should be put on with

tax incentives.”

Windsor is president of Hahn Transportation Inc.