

Additional Information on Alberta's High Load Corridor
For the Senate Joint Resolution No. 26 Study

Prepared for the Revenue and Transportation Interim Committee
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The Revenue and Transportation Interim Committee requested additional information about Alberta's High Load Corridor to provide guidance for the Senate Joint Resolution No. 26 study of the movement of oversize loads. The information in this report is from a telephone conversation that took place on February 12, 2014, with Kim Durdle, Director of the Transport Engineering Branch for the Alberta Department of Transportation.

Alberta's [High Load Corridor](#) is a series of designated routes that accommodate loads of up to 9 meters in height (29.5 feet). The main task in establishing the routes was raising or burying cables and wires that would otherwise inhibit the movement of tall vehicles.

Funding for Alberta's High Load Corridor

Alberta's High Load Corridor has been in existence for 25-30 years. There was an initial investment in the corridor of about \$1 million. These funds allowed the Alberta Department of Transportation to establish the corridor by paying utility companies to raise or bury cables and wires. Alberta's Commercial Vehicle Dimension and Weight Regulation establishes permit fees for vehicles traveling on the High Load Corridor that are 6 meters in height or higher. The fee per kilometer is:

- for a load between 6 meters and 8.9 meters: \$1 plus \$0.20 for every 10 centimeters over 6 meters in height; or
- for a load over 8.9 meters, \$6.80.

Alberta collects about \$1 million per year in High Load Corridor permit fees. The revenue is used to maintain the existing routes and to develop future routes.

Developing the Routes

The routes that comprise the High Load Corridor are contained in Alberta's Commercial Vehicle Dimension and Weight Regulation, which is akin to Montana's Administrative Rules. The routes are chosen by an advisory committee that meets about twice a year to consider adding routes to the High Load Corridor. The committee is made up of the Director of the Transport Engineering Branch, Department of Transportation bridge engineers and accounting specialists, oil company representatives, heavy haul companies, the house moving association, and utility companies. New routes have to be added to the regulation, which would be similar to our administrative rule procedure.

Corridors Established by Industry

Alberta's High Load Corridor map includes a number of routes colored green to indicate that private industry established the routes and there is no fee to use this part of the corridor. The cost to move cables and wires to make these routes accessible for high vehicles was borne collectively by private companies in the vicinity. According to Director Durdle, an industry group known as the Oil Sands Community Alliance (formerly Oil Sands Developers Group) represents industry interests and

coordinated construction of these corridors.

Permitting on the High Load Corridor

The application process for an oversize vehicle traveling on Alberta's High Load Corridor is the same as for an oversize vehicle traveling elsewhere in Alberta. There is an online application that requires the mover to identify the vehicle configuration and the route. The Department of Transportation still has to analyze whether the vehicle can safely travel the route because there may also be width, length, and weight considerations.

Applying for a move on the High Load Corridor is simplified, however, because the mover does not have the added step of arranging for the movement of cables and wires. The High Load Corridor is also already equipped with pullouts and staging areas.

Considerations When Establishing a Corridor

Director Durdle suggested the following as things to consider when developing oversize routes:

- Involve the communities that a proposed route might pass through, especially communities located on an American Indian reservation and communities in which the state highway is also the main road through town.
- If maximum dimensions are desired, they should be set in statute or rule from the outset because establishing maximums later will prove difficult.
- Consider traffic patterns, infrastructure, and pavement strength when establishing a corridor. It may be desirable to have higher standards related to pavement strength for an oversize corridor.
- Burying cables costs more than raising them but is probably worth the additional investment as future needs are unknown.
- Avoid railroad crossings when possible because oversize loads are slow-moving and may require the presence of railroad personnel to ensure that the load can cross safely. If railroad personnel are not available when the load arrives, a staging area is necessary to prevent the load from blocking traffic.

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