A common electronic freight manifest would improve the speed, accuracy, and visibility of information transfer in a freight movement, which could reap large rewards for the U.S. economy.

Electronic Freight Manifest

A Major ITS Initiative

Implementing a Common Electronic Freight Manifest

Freight volumes by 2020 are forecasted to increase by 70 percent from 1998 totals. The amount of freight moved through international ports of entry for goods shipped to the United States (or "gateways") – including seaports such as Long Beach, California, land border crossings, such as Detroit, and international airports such as JFK in New York – could more than double. Improving speed, accuracy, and information transfer when freight is transferred from one mode of transportation to another benefits the U.S. economy.

Developing a Universal Electronic Freight Manifest

The EFM initiative builds on a previous ITS freight operational test that focused on one domestic truck-air-truck supply chain. The test demonstrated a cost savings of $1.50–$3.50 per shipment, due mostly to time and labor savings. The EFM effort will test the technology and business case elements of an international supply chain deployment. It has the potential to reduce the amount of paper used in the transfer of information among the supply chain elements (e.g., manufacturer, shipper, freight forwarder to air carriers). Work to date has been focused on truck-air-truck freight interface.

Building on the success of an electronic manifest in the truck-air-truck interface, the next step could include other modal interfaces (e.g., truck-truck, truck-rail, rail-sea, and truck-sea).

In partnership with shippers and carriers, the EFM effort will be directed at:

- Clearing institutional barriers
- Demonstrating standardization of information exchange between supply chain partners
- Building public/private partnerships that showcase operational improvements
- Identifying criteria that move the industry toward implementation of this freight technology and associated operational practices

For more information about this US DOT initiative:

www.its.dot.gov/efm

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FHWA-JPO-05-023 ITS EDL 14088