

U.S. - China Transportation Forum Working Groups

The Transportation Forum (TF) serves as the principal setting for high-level multi-modal transportation discussions involving U.S. and China government and industry experts. Through the TF, officials work to develop mutually beneficial solutions to common transportation challenges. Since 2008, a series of working groups have been formally established to promote and execute critical deliverables. The current TF Working Groups are:

- 1) Hazardous Materials
- 2) Ports and Inland Waterways Initiative
- 3) Urban Congestion
- 4) Safety and Disaster Assistance and Coordination
- 5) New Technologies in Transport (Rail)

1. Hazardous Materials

The Hazardous Materials Working Group engages U.S. and Chinese government and industry with the mission of promoting the safe transport of hazardous materials by all modes. Through regulatory support and the sharing of information and effective practices, the Hazardous Materials Working Group is helping to enhance compliance with international safety regulations and advance critical safety issues relating to the transport of hazardous materials affecting U.S. – China trade. The Working Group's major objectives include:

- Engage in outreach and safety awareness efforts with industry representatives in the U.S. and China on the safe transport of hazardous materials.
- Share information and tools to enhance compliance with domestic and international hazardous materials safety regulations.
- Collaborate on hazardous materials regulatory development methods, best management practices and improving multimodal and international enforcement of hazardous materials regulations to ensure consistency between these regulatory systems.
- Promote sound regulations and consistent enforcement that enables both countries to focus on shared challenges and safety goals.

2. Ports and Inland Waterways Initiative

Ports and inland waterways play a critical role as a strategic means of expanding both bilateral and international trade. Efficient inland maritime transportation networks and related intermodal connections can dramatically benefit economic development and regional growth, while serving as a “green” transportation alternative. This Working Group engages in mutually beneficial exchanges among national and sub-national officials and local stakeholders, including the business sector. The working group's major objectives include:

- Promote sustainable growth and operation of inland river ports, terminals and intermodal centers which contribute to more efficient national freight transportation systems.
- Promote foreign and domestic commerce, economic development and job creation throughout the inland waterway system.
- Promote river- and port-related commercial and industrial development throughout the inland waterway system.
- Educate policy makers and the general public on the environmental and economic advantages of the inland rivers, ports and terminals.
- Effectively market national inland waterway systems to encourage new and existing business opportunities.

3. Urban Congestion

The Urban Congestion Working Group is focused on national government strategies for encouraging local government actions on congestion that reduce greenhouse gas and other emissions. This would include exchange of information on research, regulations, incentives, capacity building, and infrastructure measures relevant to development of national urban green transport initiatives that reduce vehicle miles traveled. The Working Group achieves this through workshops and personnel exchanges on national and local levels. Areas of cooperation include:

- Institutional challenges to implementing congestion charging in China and the United States.
- Strategies to manage car usage to minimize congestion.
- Transportation management and operations.
- Innovative strategies for parking and public space allocation in urban areas.
- Public transit prioritization.
- Sustainable urban planning strategies (green cities).

4. Safety and Disaster Assistance and Coordination

The Safety and Disaster Assistance Coordination Working Group works to promote best practices and improve transportation and disaster response management within and between the two countries. The Working Group will continue to strengthen exchanges on transportation safety supervision and facilitate technical cooperation in safety and disaster response between American and Chinese transportation institutes. The Working Group's major objectives include:

- Provide opportunities for policymakers, academia and industry to share best practices and innovative technologies that could improve safety and disaster preparedness.
- Conduct workshops on specific topics related to transportation safety and disaster assistance.
- Conduct study tours and research projects where transportation officials from U.S. and China can interact and share lessons learned and effective practices in technical areas and research.

5. New Technologies (Rail)

The U.S. and China share challenges, experiences and unique needs to improve the efficiency of existing transportation networks through innovative technology. As a result, both countries committed to establishing a “Working Group on New Technologies in Transport” with a specific focus on rail in order to provide a mechanism for the U.S. and China to share information on new technologies designed to increase the efficiency of the rail network for both passenger and freight. The areas of collaboration identified by the Working Group include:

- Track inspection and maintenance standards.
- Track structure for high speed and higher speed rail.
- Risk analysis for safety assurance.
- Transportation capacity of high speed railways – analysis and simulation.
- Vehicle qualification (dynamic performance safety assurance – testing and analysis).
- Establishment of rail operation equipment certification process.