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INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF BOSTON HAZMAT ROUTE FINDS MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH CITY-FUNDED STUDY

Battelle study does not analyze correct route, discounts accident rates and response times, uses random data points

Boston, MA –With the public comment period ending today on the new hazardous materials truck route proposed by Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, a new study has found major problems with the report Menino has used to justify his plan. Visual Risk Technologies (VRT), a Tennessee/Washington, DC based research firm contracted by the Massachusetts Motor Transportation Association (MMTA), released a report review today that found major problems with the Boston-funded study, including the fact that Battelle (which wrote the Boston report) did not analyze the correct hazardous materials route. Federal regulations require the current legal route to be used as the baseline for comparison.

Several other key flaws in the Boston report were identified by VRT, including:

- Based on the findings of the Boston Report, the **route that Mayor Menino has recommended has an accident expectancy double that of the through-route alternative**. Acceptance of the recommended route implies a willingness to accept twice as many accidents occurring on Route 128/I-95 due to increased speed and trip distance.
- The Boston Report clearly highlights the difference in preparedness between the response capability in the City of Boston and the rest of the region. **Boston-based response units can respond within 5 to 10 minutes; whereas, getting an operational team on-scene in other areas can take up to 30-60 minutes**. Even at this conservative estimate, this is a significant difference. In locations where significant congestion might occur, the ability for adequate response to arrive on the scene of an accident would further increase these times. The 1996 Routing Guide instructs analysts to use a 10-minute response time to determine adequate emergency response coverage from adequately capable teams. Response times greater than the 10-minute window are, therefore, not meeting the defined adequacy.
- The Boston Report lacks discussion of the specific hazmat movements that are under consideration before the alternative selection process is described. **The specific origins and destinations used to define the route alternatives are selected without description of the rationale for why they were chosen. Therefore, one must assume they were chosen arbitrarily or out of analytical convenience**.

- **It is not clear why a ½-mile impact range was selected,** given the discussion in the Boston Report about the remoteness of an impact from a release of a flammable liquid extending to ½ mile. The report indicates that the likely impacts from a release would mostly affect the occupants of other vehicles on the road. If this is the case, then a much narrower impact area would be appropriate. The standard range used is 1/10-mile.
- The Boston Report uses the argument that US DOT regulations adequately protect the population and the environment, so there is no need to consider the increased environmental risk. Given the number of sensitive environmental areas on the proposed alternate route, including the Cambridge water supply, environmental risk must be determined.
- The analysis of the burden on commerce in the Boston Report is exclusively focused on the local transportation of petroleum products and particularly those that are moved in the greater Boston area. **The report also makes some assumptions about the movement of petroleum products in the greater Boston area that are not supported by any data.** There are other product movements that should be considered as well, including long-haul shipments moving longer distances than those analyzed, specifically to communities in other areas that will be impacted by reduced product delivery and by increased cost.

“This report clearly illustrates that the Boston raises real public safety concerns,” said Anne Lynch, executive director of the MMTA. “Implementation of the city’s plan will increase the public health risk for a wider swath of Massachusetts residents, slow emergency response times, increase costs to businesses, and raise the cost of oil and gas for tens of thousands of residents on the South Shore.”

The full VRT report can be found here: http://mass-trucking.org/documents/BostonHazmatRouteEvaluationReportReview_final_2_.pdf

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