



TCIA PUBLIC POLICY MEETING

**Virtual
June 5, 2026**

Art Batson (Chair of the Policy Committee) was unable to attend the June meeting. George Strout from TCIA called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. Committee members present included Austin Kennedy, Erika Schoenberger, Courtney Kelly, Meggan Hargrave, Pat Turley, Randolph Hoover, Jim Hines, Josh Vrieze, David Marren, and Christopher St. Marie. Peter Gerstenberger from TCIA and Basil Thomson from Ulman Public Policy were also present (TCIA and Ulman all non-voting).

Executive Summary

The PPC committee meeting focused on TCIA's advocacy activities, potential engagement with the National Council of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL), congressional site visits, and updates on key policy priorities. The committee adopted the draft policy objectives and priorities document. TCIA proposed increased involvement with NCOIL's Property and Casualty Insurance Committee, particularly regarding model legislation on aerial imagery and tree removal, with the committee expressing support for this engagement. The meeting also included updates on OSHA's Tree Care Standard, federal and state wildfire policy developments, including recent legislative activity and wildfire mitigation efforts, and ongoing advocacy efforts related to pesticide preemption provisions in the Farm Bill and recent developments regarding H-2B cap relief provisions included in the House appropriations process. Finally, the committee discussed increased enforcement of commercial motor vehicle and CDL requirements, including English language proficiency standards, and potential impacts on industry operations.

Items and Issues Summary

Policy Priorities Objectives/Priorities Review/Approval

The committee adopted the policy objectives and priorities document for the remaining year. The document is organized into three categories: top priorities (active areas with resources), monitoring issues (potential developments to watch), and emerging issues (early tracking items).

TCIA NCOIL Meeting Participation

The committee discussed TCIA's participation in the July NCOIL Property and Casualty Insurance Committee meeting in Boston. UPP noted NCOIL's role in developing model legislation, including issues related to aerial imagery and insurance underwriting practices affecting tree work. Members supported increased engagement, citing ongoing concerns with insurers requiring tree removal and threatening non-renewals. The committee agreed to proceed with in-person attendance. TCIA will circulate potential presentation materials in advance and develop an insurance engagement strategy for committee review prior to implementation.

Advocacy Activity Report

TCIA provided an update on advocacy activities since the previous meeting. The discussion covered recent advocacy activities including the first member toolkit, auction planning, Advocacy 101 webinar series, and efforts to expand their online database.

Fly-in/On-site Plan Review

TCIA reviewed plans to shift the September Washington engagement to a localized high-impact model with on-site visits, focusing on identifying key candidates to engage with between now and November using their PAC distribution plan. TCIA and UPP discussed plans for site visits to position TCIA as an expert organization and build relationships with members of Congress, particularly those on the HELP committee. The visits are planned for late August through October, with a focus on OSHA jurisdiction and potential expansion to wildfire-related sites in the western region.

VFT-PAC Plan and Activity Report

Reviewed the VFT-PAC distribution plan, with \$56,500 budgeted and \$25,500 disbursed, supporting a bipartisan set of 30 federal lawmakers across 18 states, with activity expected to increase this quarter. Shared a state-by-state breakdown of planned vs. distributed contributions, highlighting targeted investments and priority engagement states. Discussed the strategic rationale for allocations (committee roles, relationships, issue alignment) and the need to position TCIA for potential post-election shifts in congressional control.

Issues Update

- **OSHA Tree Care Standard:** UPP reported that the rulemaking remains TCIA's top priority and has been elevated to OSHA's highest regulatory priority. OSHA is aligning draft text with Small Business Review Panel input, TCIA recommendations, and state standards. ACCSH unanimously recommended moving forward following

a May briefing. Ongoing discussions focus on scope, application, state alignment, and crane provisions. OSHA is also reviewing related enforcement guidance.

- **Wildfire:** UPP provided an update on S.140, noting upcoming Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee consideration. TCIA-supported language clarifying “owner-operator” and establishing a pre-inspection standard of care is included in a substitute amendment. TCIA continues advocacy on these provisions. Updates were also provided on NERC’s wildfire report and California’s SB 254 study, both of which may inform future policy impacting vegetation management and utility operations.
- **Pesticides:** UPP reported that pesticide preemption provisions were removed from the Farm Bill prior to House passage. He noted ongoing political challenges to advancing pesticide-related policy, including opposition from the MAHA movement.
- **Immigration (H-2B):** UPP reported that the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee advanced FY 2027 funding legislation including a seasonal employer exemption from the H-2B cap. TCIA is working to preserve this provision as the process continues. Labor groups have expressed opposition, and TCIA remains engaged through the H-2B Workforce Coalition.
- **CDL/CMV Integrity Initiative:** UPP updated the group on federal actions related to CDL and CMV policy, including English-language proficiency, non-domiciled CDL eligibility, and TPR audits. Members reported increased scrutiny and inconsistent enforcement, particularly regarding language requirements, and highlighted operational concerns. TCIA will continue monitoring and consider engagement with DOT.

Next Call

The committee discussed continuing meetings on a regular cadence, with the expectation of reconvening in approximately three months. Scheduling details will be coordinated following the meeting.

Conclusion

The meeting concluded at approximately 2:04 p.m.

Next steps

- **UPP and TCIA:** Prepare and circulate to the committee any proposed presentation, letter, or background information for the upcoming NCOIL meeting in Boston, prior to attending, for committee review and feedback.
- **UPP and TCIA:** Finalize and communicate the schedule and logistics for site visits with targeted congressional members, and coordinate with committee members to maximize member participation at these events.
- **Committee members** (especially those with operations in western states or with relevant projects): Inform UPP and TCIA of potential offices, projects, or locations suitable for hosting site visits related to wildfire or right-of-way issues, to expand site visit opportunities geographically.
- **UPP and TCIA:** Increase monitoring and communication to the committee regarding FMCSA and state-level enforcement actions affecting commercial driver licensing and English language proficiency and solicit ongoing feedback from committee members on operational impacts.
- **All committee members:** Provide feedback to UPP and TCIA on any new or ongoing issues related to commercial driver licensing, English language proficiency requirements, or state-level interpretations affecting their operations.