NTPEP GTX/REGEO TC Quarterly Conference Call

Date and time: Thursday, Feb. 11, 2016, 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. PST

Attendees: Tony Allen-WA (Chair), Jim Curtis (NYDOT), Jeff Moryl (NYDOT), Tom Burnett (NYDOT), Kevin Palmer (ARTD), John Rublein (WIDOT), Katheryn Malusky (NTPEP), Vince Glick (NTPEP), , Jonathan Curry (GMA), Keith Gardner (Crown Resources), Doug Brown (Tensar), Jarrett Nelson (TRI), Joel Sprague (TRI), and Sam Allen (TRI).

Minutes from last quarterly conference call were briefly discussed. No changes from what was sent out previously are needed.

Status/results of GTX and REGEO work plan changes in November’s ballot:

- Tony indicated that only two comments were received on each work plan, and those comments did not result in any changes. Tony asked if that was acceptable and therefore can move forward with publication. No additional comments were provided.
- Tony mentioned that he received one additional comment from NYDOT (Tom Burnett). The comment was as follows, with reference to private label products in which multiple manufacturer sources are used:
  - Can we add the following sentence to the definition of “Private Label Products” under the Terminology section, 3.18, of the Work Plan? “Private label products from multiple source manufacturers must have matching fabric structures, e.g. SF-W.”
  - There were no negatives on this proposal, so will move forward with this change. Tony will send the revised work plans to Katheryn and Vince.
  - After the conference call, Tony revised the proposed wording for clarity to the following, to be located after the sentence in Section 3.18 of both the GTX and REGEO work plans: “When multiple manufacturer sources are used for a given private label product, the products obtained from all the source manufacturers must all have the same fabric structure (e.g., weaving and bonding technique, and fiber type) and use the same polymer(s).”
  - If we hear no objections to this revised wording by end of the week of Feb. 15th, the revised wording will be used.

Discussion on next steps regarding the GTX and REGEO product mark issue:

- Do we include a product code number with the manufacturer code number in the mark? Tony mentioned the documents sent out with the agenda for this conference call, which included the following:
  - Pre-2011 (i.e., San Antonio NTPEP meeting) and industry input on this issue (position paper)
  - Comments from the states received to date on this issue

John Rublein expressed his concern about this issue. Said from his perspective the industry is still too opaque and would like to see the product code number be used. Jim Curtis and Kevin Palmer felt that a product code number would be useful to them. Keith
Gardner countered that discussion from several states at the annual NTPEP meeting in Scottsdale in 2015 felt that the manufacturer code number was adequate for their needs regarding traceability. He mentioned that ILDOT (Ed Hughes), who was one of the strongest voices in the need for the mark when the current audit program was developed, indicated that the manufacturer code number was adequate to meet their needs regarding traceability and identification. Furthermore, in the case of PENNDOT, who has been the strongest voice on the need for product code numbers in addition to the manufacturer code numbers, when they said that they are having trouble getting product with any identification, that the industry expects to have their product rejected from a jobsite when the mark is not present. Keith also said the industry feels that adding a product code number to the mark will create confusion when product must be downgraded for not meeting the specifications for its intended class (but not be wasted), especially if it is private labeled.

- Implementation of the mark for geogrids:
  Doug Brown indicated that the GMA position on adding product code numbers to the mark is based on the GTX program, and that the issues are different for geogrids. A key issue for geogrids is the number of digits in the mark due to physical limitations created by narrow geogrid ribs and limitations on rib length between junctions for some geogrids. Tony indicated that we probably don’t need near as many digits in the mark as used for the GTX program, since there are not that many geosynthetic reinforcement manufacturers. The issue of the mark needs further discussion among the geogrid reinforcement manufacturers, as many of the manufacturers have not had the chance yet to thoroughly review and consider the issue, mainly due to the fact that the final work plan was not available to everyone until just a few weeks ago when Tony sent out the agenda for this conference call.

- Conclusion on next steps:
  Tony indicated that it is obvious that this issue will need to be discussed again at the next annual meeting in May, especially to give opportunity to the most vocal states on this issue (e.g., PENNDOT) who are not in the conference call to provide their input. But Tony said that he would like to put this issue to rest one way or another in May. Therefore, will table this issue for now.

**Timeline for implementation of the REGEO audit work plan:**

Tony suggested that the REGEO work plan phase-in time should be similar to the time needed to implement the GTX audit program after the work plan was finalized. Katheryn indicated that the phase-in time for GTX was about 1.5 years? Tony indicated that key implementation issues will be the time required to get the tooling completed to make the mark, and the time required to move unmarked product out of their warehouses. Doug said that this should be discussed at the annual meeting in May (Doug will make
presentation on this issue). Tony asked about the need for mock audits. Since we are already doing a partial audit for geosynthetic reinforcement, and since we have the audit process well developed based on our experience with GTX audits, we probably don’t need any mock audits to implement this for REGEO. Joel and Katheryn confirmed this. However, it would be good to go ahead and develop the full audit worksheets for the REGEO program and provide them to the industry for review and comment. Joel will develop draft audit worksheet. This will distributed to the GMA for review.

Next annual NTPEP meeting (May 8th) GTX/REGEO TC agenda development:

The following topics were suggested:

- Mark and product code number issue
- REGEO audit plan and roll out
- Converter audit status (Joel Sprague)
- Standardizing private label letter agreement outline (Jim Curtis will provide details)
- Datamine 3 development (GTX and REGEO) – GTX and REGEO specific details only (will have overall presentation in main meeting on this subject) – Vince Glick will get Tony info on that
- Handoff to future GTX/REGEO TC leaders

Future TC leadership changes:

Tony indicated that he will be stepping down as chairman of this TC after the May 2016 annual meeting. Tony explained that he is currently chairing two very active AASHTO technical committees (the Bridge and Structure Subcommittee – T15 Technical committee on foundations and walls; and this NTPEP Geosynthetics TC) and it is becoming too much time commitment that is taking away from his ability to manage his WSDOT staff and statewide program (i.e., his day job). But he also said that he will stay on as a TC member so that he will be available to provide advice and answer questions as needed, train and mentor those who replace him, and also represent his state’s interests with regard to what is produced through this TC. Tony said that he has been in discussions with possible replacements who include John Schuler (VIDOT) as the chairman and Rodrigo Herrera (FLDOT) as the vice chairman. John has already been doing a lot with the GTX program in his current role as vice-chair, and Rodrigo has a lot of experience with geosynthetic reinforcement. So they are logical choices for these roles. Both have tentatively agreed to this, but must get approval from their respective organizations. More later on this.

Next conference call:

Will try to have one a few weeks before the annual meeting (last half of April?). Tony will send some suggested dates to Katheryn. Main purpose for call will be to prepare for annual meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m. (PST).