



### **Expedite Movement of Utility Service Fleet Vehicles for Storm Restoration**

**Problem:** Severe storms annually cause billions of dollars of property damage throughout the United States. These storms result in broad power outages with significant economic and human costs.

**Public Policy Objective:** Expedite the movement of utility service fleet vehicles for storm restoration. One of the lessons learned from Super Storm Sandy was that delays in fleet arrival at a storm site contribute to delays in restoring power to consumers and businesses.

**Discussion:** In the aftermath of a storm, electric utilities mobilize vast resources to restore electric services to consumers. Electric utilities coordinate storm restoration services, which includes dispatching their vehicle fleets with utility-service teams and their support contractors and fleet vehicles to the area of the country hit by the storm. For example, utility companies from throughout the country dispatched crews and vehicles to the Mid-Atlantic area to support the restoration effort for Super Storm Sandy.

The timely restoration of power is frustrated, however, when electric utility fleet managers face delays in dispatching utility service vehicles fleets to the affected area and returning these vehicles to their home base after power has been restored. There are often conflicting state requirements that create delays in dispatching crews and vehicles across and through neighboring states. Differing state requirements for hours of service, fuel taxes, toll lanes, and registration and licensing requirements, slow down what should be a rapid response. The utility fleet manager often has to communicate and work through obstacles and barriers with every state through which the restoration fleet will travel to a storm-site. Although many states recognize another state's emergency declaration in order to facilitate vehicle movement, reciprocity does vary and can delay the arrival of essential utility relief supplies and crews to a disaster area in a timely manner.

**A Step Forward:** What is needed is a process for expediting the movement of the utility fleet to the disaster area and back to the home service area – a process that allows the fleet manager to quickly dispatch the utility service vehicles to the emergency response area. One of the tools discussed by utility fleet managers is a system where fleet vehicles are identified and registered in advance as storm response vehicles. Such vehicles would be equipped with a unique vehicle identifier that expedites movement through weigh stations and toll booths and satisfies State registration and tax requirements. For illustrative purposes: Utility service and support vehicles would be preregistered with a nongovernmental third-party and equipped with a unique vehicle identifier and technology to facilitate movement through states.

**Proposal:** NAFA Fleet Management Association proposes that a meeting of stakeholders be convened to explore options for development of a national system for preclearance of utility service and support vehicles for storm response and to reach consensus on a path forward. Suggested invitees would include, among others, the National Governors Association, EEI, CVSA, NRECA, APPA, AASHTO, the National Petroleum Council, IFTA, IRP, FMCSA, DHS, All-Hazards Consortium, and The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association.