




January 28, 2014

TO: Keith Metcalf, Eastern Region
Dan Sarles, North Central Region
Lorena Eng, Northwest Region
Kevin Dayton, Olympic Region
Don Whitehouse, South Central Region
Donald Wagner, Southwest Region
Craig Stone, Toll Division Director
Julie Meredith, SR 520 Program Director

FROM:  Linea Laird, Chief Engineer
Assistant Secretary of Engineering and Regional Operations
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SUBJECT: **Project Delivery Memo #13-02 – Wood Posts in Beam Guardrail**

PURPOSE AND DIRECTION

Background

Recently passed legislation requires that WSDOT reintroduce the option of using wood guardrail posts for new guardrail installations. ESSB 5024 Section 306(17) states:

“The legislature finds that there are sixteen companies involved in wood preserving in the state that employ four hundred workers and have an annual payroll of fifteen million dollars. Prior to the department's switch to steel guardrails, ninety percent of the twenty-five hundred mile guardrail system was constructed of preserved wood and one hundred ten thousand wood guardrail posts were produced annually for state use. Moreover, the policy of using steel posts requires the state to use imported steel. Given these findings, where practicable, and until June 30, 2015, the department shall include the design option to use wood guardrail posts, in addition to steel posts, in new guardrail installations. The selection of posts must be consistent with the agency design manual policy that existed before 19 December 2009.”

In 2009 WSDOT made the decision to require steel guardrail posts in new guardrail installations. ESSB 5024 reverses that decision, and directs WSDOT to allow the use of wood posts as an option when installing guardrail.

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Direction

The policy change described in this memorandum provides for the use of wood guardrail posts. This memo provides interim policy direction, deleting *WSDOT Design Manual Section 1610.06(3)* "Beam Guardrail Post Selection Criteria", and bullet 10 under *Section 1610.06(4)* "Additional Guidance". All other bullet items under *Section 1610.06(4)* remain in force. This change is effective immediately for contracts bid on or after January 6, 2014, and will remain effective until June 30, 2015.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

Development Division

Revise affected DM chapter. Provide outreach and information to stakeholders about policy change as needed.

Regions

Implement policy and monitor performance. Provide feedback to Development Division about issues or concerns during implementation.

cc: Region Project Development Engineers
Region Planning Managers
Region Traffic Engineers
Pasco Bakotich
Jeff Carpenter
John Milton