

**Remarks Prepared for
David Strickland, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
for
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“Collaborating to Advance Automotive Technology and Innovation”

Introduction

Good afternoon. Thank you, John [Quain, NYT] for that kind introduction. It’s a pleasure to be back at CES.

Many of you might know that this is my last CES as NHTSA administrator. So it’s a little bit of a bittersweet occasion because this has been one of my favorite events to attend.

As a techie and a gearhead, CES is several days of nirvana—or maybe nerd-vana—for folks like me. I get to see the latest advances and spend time with some of the world’s most innovative minds.

It’s also a nice change of pace from Washington where the thinking can often be as stale as week old bread.

As NHTSA Administrator, CES has also become a must-attend event. It embodies this still relatively new and vital nexus between the technology and automotive industries. The relationship may still be new but the question we seek to address will be central for years to come: how to work together to promote innovation while ensuring and enhancing safety?

Gretzky

In pondering this question, I found myself thinking about The Great One, Wayne Gretzky.

Now, you may be asking yourself what does a Canadian hockey player who retired 15 years ago have to do with the intersection of technology and automotive safety? Bear with me. I’ll get there.

If you don’t know, Gretzky learned hockey in the small town of Brantford, Ontario from his dad, Wally. For hours a day, the two would run drills on a backyard pond that Wayne and his brothers dubbed the “Wally Coliseum.” He was a prodigy, playing and destroying kids three or four years older at every level of youth hockey. By 17, he was a pro.

Even if you don’t know hockey, you probably know that Wayne was the best that ever lived. He owns just about every record, won every award, and drank from the Stanley Cup four times. People chalked it all up to God-given talent. He was just better. Wayne said that was all nonsense. He said the talent wasn’t God-given; it was Wally-given.

During countless hours of practice at the Wally Coliseum, his dad hammered into him a lesson that's the difference between talented scorers and league-leaders, between good players and great ones.

The lesson was this: "Skate where the puck is going, not where it's been."

It sounds pretty simple. But how do you know where the puck is going?

You know where the puck is going because you study the game and the players. You know where the puck is going because you communicate with your teammates. You know where the puck is going because everyone is working together.

That's not unlike my vision for NHTSA and for our work with the industries' innovators. Together, we will move to where technology is going, not where it's been.

How do we know where technology is going? We know where technology is going because we study the field. We know where the technology because we communicate with industry leaders. We know where the technology is going because we work together to create an environment that is pro-innovation and pro-safety.

You'll find two prime examples of what I'm talking about in our approach to distraction and vehicle-to-vehicle technologies. On both issues, NHTSA is positioned to be proactive, not reactive; to offer stability not uncertainty.

Distraction

As many of you know, NHTSA has undertaken a three phase effort to develop voluntary Distraction Guidelines that address rapidly advancing automotive and mobile device technologies.

With every day, we're seeing new car tech that's offering new comforts and amenities for drivers and passengers. Our goal at NHTSA is to help usher in new technologies while filtering out new distractions.

We studied the issue closely. Our naturalistic driving study showed that visual-manual tasks associated with hand-held phones and other portable devices increased the risk of getting into a crash by three times.

Armed with this knowledge NHTSA has undertaken a three phase effort to develop voluntary Distraction Guidelines that address rapidly advancing automotive and mobile device technologies.

This past April, we released Phase 1. This phase addressed in-vehicle technology, such as entertainment and navigation systems. It includes recommendations to limit the time a driver may glance away from the roadway to 2 seconds or less and a cumulative time spent glancing away from the roadway to 12 seconds or less. The guidelines also recommend disabling certain operations that involve taking the driver's eyes off the road and/or hands off the wheel, unless the vehicle is stopped and the vehicle is in park.

Phase Two will address mobile and aftermarket devices. These guidelines will be based on general principles similar to those that guided Phase 1. We expect to propose our second phase

guidelines and seek public comment in 2014. We look forward to your input and to our continued collaboration on CEA's own handheld guidelines. We also appreciate the work that many companies are doing to differentiate between devices controlled by drivers from all others in the vehicle.

In Phase Three, we will address voice interface technologies. We've initiated research to support the development of guidelines for auditory-vocal human-machine interfaces and we plan to issue these guidelines after the necessary research has been completed.

The goal of our guidelines is to provide the industry a roadmap that helps them develop and introduce of new technologies without undermining safety. Safety is not just the responsibility of the regulatory agency. It is the duty that we all have to the public. I want to express my appreciation to the many companies that are working with NHTSA and other organizations to combat the very real dangers of distracted driving.

By continuing to study the issue and by working with the industry as technologies advance, I believe we can work together to ensure drivers receive the amenities they want without the introduction new and deadly distractions.

V2V

Our distraction work is about limiting technology's potential to undermine safety. Our vehicle-to-vehicle work is about advancing technology's promise of improving safety. But our approach is the same: to study the issue closely, act where and when we believe we can be effective, and always communicate closely with industry to understand current and future developments.

V2V has the potential to make smart drivers even smarter. When vehicles are capable of communicating their movements to each other, you'll know whether the car ahead of you has stopped short or if a car approaching at an intersection is on a collision course with yours. When linked with active in-vehicle technologies, V2V has the potential to help drivers avoid or mitigate crashes in 80 percent of the vehicle crash scenarios involving unimpaired drivers.

Our research in this area has been extensive. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Transportation launched a real-world field test based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, that includes nearly 3,000 cars, trucks, and buses equipped with V2V communications technology. The test vehicles were equipped with communication devices that send electronic data messages, receive messages from other equipped vehicles, and translate the data into a warning to the driver about an impending crash.

NHTSA will use the valuable data from the model deployment as it decides if and when these connected vehicle safety technologies should be incorporated into the fleet. We plan to make a decision about the Agency's next steps for V2V technology for light duty vehicles in the very near future—and a decision for heavy duty vehicles in about a year's time.

The lifesaving potential of V2V technologies is enormous. If adopted across the fleet, and tied to vehicle-to-infrastructure technologies, the results could be nothing short of revolutionary for transportation safety and for vehicle efficiency. It would represent an advance matched only by the development of interstate highway system itself. It's one of the many reasons I am so excited about the future.

Close

As I get ready to depart NHTSA, I remain confident in the Agency's ability to work with industry to foster innovation while promoting safety. That confidence is borne out of my experience working alongside our Agency's consummate professionals and the work we've done to create a constructive dialogue between the Agency and industry's top leaders and innovators.

When you innovate, we'll be ready because we'll have done the research. When you're dreaming up the next great advances, we'll be listening so we can move forward toward a safer future together. That collaboration will ensure that we're all moving to where the technology is going, not where it's been.

If we continue to collaborate, if we keep open our doors to discussion and our minds to new solutions, your innovations will find their ways quickly and safely to market. That will benefit all of us: this regulator, your industries, and most importantly, the needs and demands of America's consumers.

Thank you.

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