Remarks Prepared for
O. Kevin Vincent, Chief Counsel
National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator
SAE 2014 World Congress and Exposition
Cobo Center - Detroit, MI
Tuesday, April 8, 2014

Good morning. Thank you, Chung Kook Park for that kind introduction. And thank you to the SAE 2014 World Congress for the warm welcome.

First off, our Acting Administrator, David Friedman, asked that I pass along his sincere regrets at not being able to join you here today, as he had planned.

As you know, David is a fellow engineer. I also have an engineering degree but early on decided I would make a lousy engineer and had to go to law school to get a J.D. to make a living. But David's a real engineer. When he originally accepted your gracious invitation, he was excited to have a chance to come back to SAE. In fact, when we discussed the invite, his face lit up as he recalled attending past World Congresses, where he spent time with colleagues and friends, presented papers, and participated on panels.

If you've had the chance to meet David, I know you understand the depth of his knowledge and his passion for advancing the cause of vehicle safety and fuel efficiency. So, for him and many like him, not being able to come to the World Congress is like a kid not being able to go Disneyworld. He was pleased to join SAE in Washington, at the Government and Industry Meeting, and he hopes to be able to visit with you again very soon.

For my part, I'm glad to be here because the engineers here today are helping power a resurgence of the automotive industry and tremendous progress on safety and on fuel efficiency, which are of course the dual mandate of NHTSA.

As the industry has recently surged back to life, we've learned this fact: when you unleash engineers to push the edge of the envelope, the driving public enjoys amazing results. You can be tremendously proud of the benefits you've delivered on safety and efficiency. Your work is helping to save lives, as well as to save money and reduce emissions through greater fuel efficiency.

We're also proud of our work at NHTSA and the full record of our almost five decade mission to prevent deaths and injuries on America's roads.

We've urged Americans to drive safely and partnered with state and local law enforcement to discourage dangerous behaviors, such as driving drunk, driving distracted, or driving or riding without a seat belt.

We've helped Americans make informed choices about their vehicles with our 5-Star Safety Ratings that tell consumers which vehicles perform best in the unfortunate event of a crash.

We've ensured that vehicles with safety defects were recalled so that consumers would be protected.

And we've helped accelerate the adoption of vehicle features, such as air bags and electronic stability control, which are proven to save lives.

All of these efforts have made a tremendous difference and will always be a part of NHTSA's safety mission because they are effective.

Since 1970, highway fatalities have declined by 36 percent and have fallen by 22 percent just in the last decade.

But, with more than 30,000 fatalities on America's roadways each year, we must continue to look to new and innovative ways to save lives.

For example, while highway fatalities are today at historic lows, the same three factors continue to be major contributors to the crash toll each and every year:

- About half of all highway fatalities are unbelted;
- About a third of all highway fatalities involve an impaired driver; and,
- Ninety percent of all crashes involve an element of human error.

NHSTA will never stop trying to convince Americans to drive safely by always wearing their seatbelts, to never drive after they've been drinking, and to never drive while distracted. We've made tremendous progress thanks to our combined enforcement and education efforts. But technology will soon deliver three exciting developments that can be game changers for roadway safety.

First, seatbelt interlocks, which could prevent a vehicle from being driven if the driver and passengers are not buckled up. When you realize that more than 11,000 unrestrained people died in vehicle crashes in 2012, you get a sense of the lifesaving difference this technology could make.

Second, a driver alcohol detection system (DADSS) that could prevent a vehicle from being driven by a drunk driver. In 2012, more than 10,000 lives were lost due to drunk driving crashes. That should give us perspective on the need to advance this technology.

Third, and finally, forward collision detection and mitigation that could detect a forward crash before it occurs and take corrective action. With the right test methods to evaluate the quality

of the systems, NHTSA will have multiple ways forward to speed adoption of this technology into the fleet, which could help us drive down the number of crashes due to human error.

Of course, it will take time for these technologies to make their way into the fleet. But these technologies are achievable. They will save lives. And we at NHTSA will work to advance from an era of crashworthiness to one where the focus will be on crash avoidance.

Of course, the crown jewel of crash avoidance technology is vehicle-to-vehicle communications.

Secretary Foxx and Acting Administrator Friedman were proud to announce in February NHTSA's plan to move ahead with this lifesaving advance. As Acting Administrator Friedman said at that time, "[w]e will look back on that moment as one in which we dramatically bent the historic arc of transportation safety in favor of preventing injuries and saving lives."

The extensive research we've conducted at NHTSA demonstrates V2V's viability and value.

As one example, in 2012, the U.S. Department of Transportation launched a real-world model deployment based in Ann Arbor that included nearly 3,000 cars, trucks, buses, and even a few motorcycles outfitted with V2V communications technology.

The technology enabled test vehicles to exchange anonymous safety data messages. Many of these vehicles were also able to translate the data into a warning to the driver in case of an impending crash.

NHTSA used all of the information available to us from more than a decade of research, including the valuable data from the model deployment, when we decided that now was the time to begin to take action that will, in time, make these safety technologies available to the hundreds of millions of drivers across the country.

NHTSA is currently finalizing its research report on V2V communication technology and will make it available for public comment in the coming weeks. It will include the Department's research findings and analysis of relevant issues in several key areas including technical feasibility, privacy and security. We urge you to weigh in because your input is essential to the process.

NHTSA will then begin working on a full and thorough rulemaking proceeding for V2V devices in new vehicles in a future year. We will use an equally careful and deliberative process as we make a decision for V2V technologies for heavy duty vehicles, which will occur in about a year's time.

NHTSA has worked in close partnership in V2V research with several leading automotive manufacturers and academic institutions to reach this point. Continued collaboration is essential to ensuring V2V technology's interoperability across vehicles. We are grateful to all of our partners who have contributed to this effort because the lifesaving potential is enormous.

When these V2V technologies are adopted across the fleet, the results could be nothing short of revolutionary for transportation safety. It would represent an advance matched only by the development of the interstate highway system itself. And when tied to vehicle-to-infrastructure technologies, V2V's potential will grow to include not just improved safety, but also vehicle efficiency, which is of course another component of NHTSA's mission.

We've been doing our part at NHTSA to achieve President Obama's climate and energy security goals.

We've already helped the Administration achieve the toughest fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks in America's history.

These standards require doubling new vehicle fuel economy by 2025, which will save the average driver more than $8,000 in fuel costs over the lifetime of his or her vehicle and eliminate six billion metric tons of carbon pollution – more than the United States emits in an entire year.

As laid out in the final rule, the Administration will begin a mid-term review within the next few years to determine whether or not these standards should be changed based on the latest technical, economic, and other relevant data.

We also set first-in-the-world fuel efficiency standards for medium and heavy duty trucks, which will deliver a quick payback for vehicle owners and savings that top $50 billion in fuel costs, 530 million barrels of oil, and 270 million metric tons of carbon pollution over the lifetime of vehicles built for model years 2014-2018.

These standards for medium and heavy-duty vehicles are harmonized between our authority and that of EPA. We have standards that are flexible, that recognize the diversity in the heavy vehicle fleet, and that represent a foundation from which we can achieve even more fuel and emissions savings as we move forward to a second round of joint rulemaking.

To further advance the cause of efficiency, the President has asked us to set new, post-2018 standards for medium and heavy-duty trucks. He has asked us to achieve greater reductions in fuel consumption and to continue efforts to improve the efficiency of moving goods across our nation. And he has asked that we partner with industry leaders and other key stakeholders on these new standards during his second term.

The process of putting together these new standards will raise new questions that must be addressed:

- We will achieve significant savings in the first round but how much more is possible as we move forward?

- The first round standards will drive more efficient engines and tractors but what additional improvements are available from other components of the vehicle, such as the trailer?

- What are the different fuel-saving opportunities that could be achieved if we look at the entire vehicle?

These and many other questions are being explored as we move toward the post-2018 standards. We are working closely with our partners at EPA to answer them. We will also continue our partnership with key stakeholders who must be part of that conversation and the discovery solutions.

All of you have heard about the enforcement cases for untimely recalls NHTSA has pursued against Toyota, a few years ago, and the ongoing case against General Motors now. I'm not here today to talk about either case. But I do want to talk about the next case, or more precisely about how you can help to avoid the next case.

The first line of defense against safety defects is not NHTSA. Each manufacturer of vehicles, or automotive equipment, is responsible for identifying safety defects in its own fleet, and then promptly reporting them to NHTSA and conducting a recall. Our agency's job is to make sure your company is doing its job, and to catch problems when it does not.

The message I have delivered to the senior lawyers and management of your companies is simple -- they have to have practices and procedures in place so that when qualified personnel in their companies find that a vehicle or product has a flaw that presents an unreasonable risk to safety, the company responds immediately. And I have told your management that the company will be held accountable if it fails to respond promptly to reports within their company of possible safety defects.

Your job, as the talented engineers in your companies is to flag for your company's attention any problem that could be a defect as soon as you identify it. You are truly the first line of defense for the American public against safety defects.

In this time of automotive innovation—led by the engineers here today—we have the ability to achieve great things for safety and efficiency.

We can drive down the sad statistics about deaths and injuries on our highways by advancing the next groundbreaking vehicle safety technologies. The result will be families spared from tragedy and young people who go on to learn, to grow and to succeed.

We can also address the ongoing challenge of climate change by requiring cars that are increasingly efficient and lighter on the planet. We won't be protecting the planet so much as we'll be saving ourselves and our children's future.

The people in this room have the ability to effect this positive change, to save lives, and to secure our future. And we'll be supporting and encouraging your efforts at NHTSA.

Thank you for asking me to be with you. I look forward to working with you for a safer and more efficient future. And may you have a successful 2014 World Congress.

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