

**Remarks prepared for**  
**David Strickland, Administrator**  
**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

**National Sleep Foundation**  
**NSF Sleep Health & Safety Conference**

**Washington, D.C.**

**March 18, 2011**

**Thank you, Dr. Cseizler, for your warm welcome. It is a pleasure to be here. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood sends his regards and regrets his schedule did not permit him to accept your invitation.**

**On his behalf I can tell you, safety is the over-riding priority of our nation's transportation systems. For Secretary LaHood, this is not just lip-service. In October 2009, he formed the DOT Safety Council to bring all nine DOT administrators to the same table, so that the Department could more effectively address cross-cutting safety issues, such as operator fatigue. He asked the Research and Innovative Technologies Administration to lead and coordinate the Council's agenda.**

**The Research and Innovative Technologies Administration manages the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, which is engaged in advanced human factors research that explores key safety issues, including fatigue management in rail operations.**

**Every operating mode at the Department of Transportation is fully engaged in the Secretary's drive to keeping our transportation systems the safest in the world. Fatigue management is part of that ongoing work.**

**In 2010, the Federal Aviation Administration identified the issue of pilot fatigue as a top priority during the Airline Safety Call to Action following the crash of Colgan Air Flight 3407 in February 2009. The**

**Agency launched an aggressive effort to take advantage of the latest research on fatigue to create a new pilot flight, duty and rest proposal based on fatigue science.**

**The Agency published a landmark Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in September 2010 which would allow pilots more rest and give airlines the flexibility to integrate fatigue science into their scheduling practices.**

**This new proposal recognizes that airplanes operate globally over multiple time zones and that short-leg, multi-leg, and long-haul flights all present challenges. In addition, technology has evolved to enable airplanes to fly much further than in the past. In this**

**environment, a variety of factors can affect pilot alertness, judgment and performance.**

**While Federal Aviation Administration rules already state that a pilot must be fit for duty, the Agency is proposing to strengthen that requirement. Under the proposal, an air carrier would not be able to assign (and, a pilot would not be able to accept) an assignment if the pilot is too fatigued. In addition, a company employee who suspects a pilot of being too fatigued to perform his or her duties during flight would be able to report that information to the air carrier, so that the air carrier could make a determination of whether or not the pilot is too fatigued to fly.**

**The Agency expects to issue a final rule by August 1, 2011.**

**At the surface transportation level, the Federal Transit Administration recently partnered with the American Public Transportation Association to issue a rail transit standard for hours of service – limiting hours worked by train operators to 14 hours within a 24 hour period and also providing recommendations for limitations on the number of consecutive days worked. This standard also recommends that rail transit agencies implement fatigue management programs in keeping with the Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 81: Toolbox for Transit Operator Fatigue.**

**As result of a fatal train collision in Boston in May 2008, the National Transportation Safety Board issued recommendations to the Agency and to every rail transit agency in the nation to address sleep apnea and other sleep disorders as part of medical qualification programs. The Federal Transit Administration has done some initial research on this topic, issuing a briefing paper to the rail transit community regarding challenges and effective practices. In the coming fiscal year, the Agency plans to complete an in-depth survey of the transit industry regarding the practices currently in place to address sleep apnea and other sleep disorders and to promote the general wellness of transit employees.**

**The Agency also offers courses on fatigue management through the National Transit Institute and the Transportation Safety Institute.**

**When it comes to fatigue on our roadways, there are three operating modes at the Department tackling safety issues, including drowsy driving.**

**The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulates more than 500,000 trucking companies, involving more than 3 million licensed commercial drivers, and 4,000 interstate bus companies. Hours of service, fatigue, and drowsy driving are safety issues the Agency deals with regularly.**

**Last year, after holding five listening sessions across the country with industry stakeholders, the Agency published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on hours of service. The rule is designed to ensure that drivers get the rest needed to drive safely while on-duty.**

**The proposal calls for commercial drivers to complete all driving within a 14-hour, non-extendable window with no more than 13 hours on-duty. The proposal retains the current requirement for 10 consecutive hours off-duty for drivers at the end of the workday.**

**The rulemaking also leaves open for comment whether or not drivers should be limited to 10 or 11 hours of maximum daily driving time within the 14-hour window. And it would modify the “34-hour restart” provision allowing drivers to restart the clock on their weekly 60-70 hours by taking at least 34 consecutive hours off duty; drivers would only be allowed to use the restart once per week and the restart period must include two midnight-to-6 a.m. periods.**

**The proposal includes a mandatory break during the workday of at least 30 minutes prior to driving, or continuing to drive, if the driver has accumulated 7 hours or more of on-duty time.**

**The comment period on this rule closed on March 4 and the Agency received about 25,000 comments.**

**Federal Motor Carriers just published a proposed rule that will require installing electronic on-board recorders or EOBRs in many more trucks and buses. The Agency feels that wider use of electronic on-board recorders would give carriers and drivers an effective tool to strengthen their hours of service compliance.**

**Many carriers have already moved on this technology and installed these recorders on their fleets. The comment period on this rule ends on April 4.**

**Estimates of the impact of fatigue or drowsiness on crashes and injuries involving motor vehicles vary because there is no objective test to determine drowsiness or fatigue in a driver who has been in a crash.**

**Our research has identified drivers most at risk for drowsy driver crashes as those between the ages of 16 and 29, older adults, males, drivers who work night shifts, long haul truck drivers and people with a sleep disorder such as sleep apnea, and people taking sedating medications.**

**So what can we do about drowsy drivers?**

**Countermeasures can be infrastructure-based methods – and I’ll talk about these in a minute – they can be legislative in nature, including Graduated Drivers License laws that limit the times when novices can drive and hours of service regulations for commercial drivers, and, finally, education programs to increase drivers’ awareness of the effects of fatigue and drowsiness on driving safety.**

**In terms of keeping those fatigued drivers safe, we see great potential in technology, specifically crash avoidance technologies as well as safety enhancements enabled through vehicle-to-vehicle communication. These types of technologies hold great promise for enhancing driver awareness and increasing safety in the future.**

**Specifically, I'm talking about vehicle-based technologies such as Forward Collision Warning Systems, Lane Change Assist, Advanced Object Detection Systems, etc. These technologies alert drivers in potentially critical situations (such as when drowsy or distracted) to help prevent collisions with other vehicles. Some of these technologies may become capable of detecting vulnerable road-users such as pedestrians and cyclists. We hope to encourage the demand for, and use of, these technologies.**

**We are also working to determine the future safety benefits of vehicle-to-vehicle communications. NHTSA has entered into a cooperative agreement with an industry partnership including, Ford, General Motors, Honda, Hyundai-Kia, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan Toyota and Volkswagen that will develop and evaluate the effectiveness of safety systems that use vehicle-to-**

**vehicle communications. We're currently in the second year of a 3-year effort with this group.**

**This project will ensure that vehicle communications are interoperable across all vehicles regardless of make or model. The effort will also help us to determine the minimum performance levels and safety impact of safety applications enabled by vehicle-to-vehicle communications. We believe this technology has the potential to save thousands of lives each year while at the same time offering the opportunity to reduce congestion and provide other services to vehicles owners.**

**The Federal Highway Administration is the lead on any infrastructure based countermeasure to highway safety problems.**

**It allotted approximately \$1.27 billion in ARRA funds to projects specifically aimed at improving safety and traffic management. This represents hundreds of miles of rumble strips (to alert drivers they are leaving the driving lane) and cable median barriers (to reduce head-on, cross median crashes or their severity).**

**But this is only the tip of the iceberg. All highway projects built with ARRA funds have been designed according to the latest safety standards, with many including wider shoulders, new and more effective guardrails, and bike and pedestrian facilities.**

**The Agency is also promoting the use of nine countermeasures to improve safety, several of which – in addition to the rumble strips and median barriers – would have an impact on fatigued or drowsy drivers.**

**A third is called Safety Edge. It is a modification to standard paving equipment that paves the edge of a road at a 30 degree angle instead 90 degrees. This makes it easier to steer the car back on the road if it starts to drift off, reducing the dangers of “over-steering” and driving into on-coming traffic.**

**Federal Highways Administrator Mendez is also advancing Safety Edge as part of his Every Day Counts initiative, which is designed to shorten project delivery and speed the deployment of proven, market-ready technologies into the marketplace. Safety Edge**

**is one of five technologies being advanced in the first round of EDC.**

**The Agency is actively pursuing roadway treatments such as flashing beacons on stop signs, speed activated speed displays, and rumble strips to help alert drowsy and otherwise impaired drivers to refocus on the driving situation at hand.**

**As you can see, across the Department of Transportation, we are searching for solutions to critical safety issues such as fatigued operators in transportation systems. Thank you for your attention.**