

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

**NHTSA Distraction Workshop  
Washington, DC  
April 20, 2010  
“Moving Forward on Distraction”**

**Good morning. It is a pleasure to welcome you to NHTSA’s  
Distraction Workshop. Thank you for being here and  
working with us to address this major highway safety  
problem.**

**Last fall, Secretary Ray LaHood and the U.S. Department of  
Transportation focused national attention on this dangerous  
problem, and invited stakeholders to gather for a Distracted  
Driving summit. From that springboard and with the  
continued leadership of Secretary LaHood, we’ve done a lot**

**of work and focused a lot of attention on this issue in a very short time. But we are just getting started.**

**Decades of experience with seat belts and drunk driving has taught us it takes a consistent combination of leadership from elected officials at all levels of government, a comprehensive strategy, public education, effective enforcement and adjudication, and grassroots advocacy, to improve safety performance. This experience shows that drivers can and do change their behavior over time.**

**Today, we unveil NHTSA's plan to eliminate distraction-related crashes. It won't happen overnight. This is a complex problem that requires a combination of strategies. We can – and have – leveraged the wide range of talents and**

**capabilities in our agency to come up with the integrated approaches reflected in our plan.**

**You will be discussing the details throughout this morning's sessions, but I want to touch on some of the highlights—some of which are already in place.**

**For example, in Syracuse, New York, and Hartford, Connecticut, Secretary LaHood and I just kicked off a two-year federally funded pilot program to test the effectiveness of highly publicized law enforcement efforts to change driver behavior and get them to put down their cell phones.**

**We recently unveiled sample legislation that States can use as a starting point to craft laws prohibiting texting while driving. Hopefully, this will help all the State legislatures currently considering such laws to move forward.**

**So far, 23 States plus D.C. and Guam have texting laws covering all drivers. That's a good start, but we've got to do better. I know lawmakers around the country are studying this seriously.**

**We're seeking 50 million dollars in next year's budget for an incentive grant program to encourage more States to pass these laws.**

**We're looking at improved crash and citation data through enhanced police reporting, and, we are looking to various technology solutions, as well, including cell phone filters, the long-term benefits of crash avoidance systems, and developing guidelines for in-vehicle communication systems.**

**Meanwhile, our partners over at FMCSA are using their existing authority to prohibit commercial interstate truck and bus drivers from texting while driving, or using a handheld cell phone.**

**This decision sends a strong message that we don't merely ask commercial drivers to operate their vehicles responsibly – we require them to.**

**President Obama is making sure that Federal workers and contractors practice what we preach. He issued an executive order that prohibits all Federal workers from text messaging while driving on the job, and while using government-issued Blackberrys and other such devices during off-duty hours.**

**On the outreach side, we're sponsoring a website, [distraction.gov](http://distraction.gov), which acts as a national clearinghouse for information on distracted driving. It also makes our position on Distracted Driving clear, and it details our commitment to work across the spectrum with private and public entities as well as advocacy groups to tackle distracted driving. It also has a copy of the plan we're discussing today.**

**And this issue is being assimilated into the national popular culture. In addition to hundreds of bills addressing distraction being introduced in State legislatures across the country, this issue has captured Oprah Winfrey's attention; she's launched her own campaign against texting and driving.**

**We have arrived at a critical point in the Nation's effort to combat the tragedy of distracted driving. Working together, we can deploy a multi-disciplinary strategy to make all road users safer by reducing driver distraction. This collaboration was initiated at the Summit and we want to introduce our efforts to move forward to make our roadways and vehicles the safest in the world. Once again,**

**welcome to all of you and I hope that your time spent here  
today will be productive.**

**Thank you. #**