

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

JASIC Government-Industry Seminar on Vehicle Safety

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Good afternoon President Horigome and MLIT colleagues.

I am very pleased to be here today. I'd like to extend a special greeting to our hosts, and to all of our distinguished colleagues, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I hope this will be the first of many information exchanges between all of us.

Some of the biggest issues America and the World now face, as a global community, involve the auto industry. Rising fuel prices, energy independence, global warming and evolving wireless communications...all of these issues touch the auto industry in some way.

It is a time for new thinking, new solutions, and a broader approach to solving our safety issues.

For example, the Secretary of Transportation announced a new policy on bicycle and pedestrian safety to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling. The Department of Transportation is promoting these efforts to reduce congestion, pollution, and the reliance on oil.

As part of this effort, we are working to promote pedestrian safety. We are working to implement comprehensive pedestrian safety programs that will emphasize behavior and traffic enforcement that will complement manufacturer's efforts on pedestrian safety technologies.

As we are working to promote transportation alternatives, we want our vehicles to be as fuel efficient as possible. The Obama Administration has pushed for the development of aggressive but achievable fuel economy standards.

NHTSA, working with the Environmental Protection Agency, delivered on President Obama's call for a strong

and coordinated national policy for fuel economy and greenhouse gas emission standards for motor vehicles, and we did so in a way that does not compromise safety. We published the final rule on Corporate Average Fuel Economy last month.

I think we are headed in the right direction, but as with any change, there will be new challenges that arise. For example, as we move to hybrid electric vehicles in an effort to diminish our reliance on oil, we are creating a much quieter fleet.

A quieter fleet could potentially put pedestrians at risk, especially blind pedestrians. NHTSA is currently conducting a research program on quieter cars and the safety of blind

pedestrians. Our initial analysis shows that hybrid electric vehicles do have a significantly higher incidence rate of pedestrian crashes than internal combustion engine vehicles for certain maneuvers—like slowing or stopping, backing up, entering or leaving a parking space and making a turn.

We are beginning work on phase 2 of this project, intended to assess how we might require vehicles to emit a base level of sound at low speeds to provide some level of identification to pedestrians that a vehicle is approaching. We think that to be effective, this sound has to be readily identifiable as a vehicle.

We are actively working on crash avoidance technologies and believe they offer great hope for safety in the future.

Vehicle-based technologies such as Forward Collision Warning Systems and, Lane Departure Warning Systems will provide drivers a little extra help when they need it most.

Later this year, we will begin to encourage the demand for and use of these technologies. Other technologies such as those capable of detecting vulnerable road-users such as pedestrians and cyclists also show great promise.

We are looking at the future safety benefits of vehicle-to-vehicle communications, or V2V. 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 in the second year of a 4-year effort that is part of the Department's Intellidrive Program.

Drivers and other road users must take an active role in safety—their own and that of those sharing the road. Vehicle occupants need to buckle up and keep focused on the task of driving. Technologies may be able to detect the presence of vulnerable road users, but both they and the vehicle drivers need to be on the lookout for each other.

Take for example, the issue of Distracted Driving.

Distracted Driving is dangerous – in the United States, almost 6000 lives lost in 2008 alone due to all types of distractions – and we are determined to put an end to it. Secretary LaHood has placed special emphasis on addressing distraction and the whole Department of Transportation has followed suit.

My intent is for NHTSA to develop an evaluative framework for in-car technologies. Rather than react to every technology as it pops up and becomes a distraction, NHTSA needs a framework that clearly defines the danger zone for the driver — allowing NHTSA to keep pace with the industry, rather than playing catch-up.

We will not take a back seat while new dashboard *infotainment* systems are introduced. These have too great a potential to create more and more distraction for the driver. As part of our NHTSA Distraction Plan we will be taking a hard look at guidelines or requirements for these systems. I am challenging the auto industry and the cell phone industry to work collaboratively with us to keep the driver focused on their required task: driving.

We are on track to roll out our enhanced government 5-star safety ratings system with the 2011 model year vehicles. For the new ratings, we made changes to the existing front and side crash ratings programs.

We added a family of crash test dummies and a side impact pole test to increase occupant safety. We established an overall safety score that will combine the star ratings from the front, side, and rollover programs. Finally, the Agency also implemented a program that we hope will encourage the demand for and use of advanced crash avoidance technologies.

I hope that when we meet again, we will continue to have interesting things to talk about. I believe we are putting the right framework in place to protect the American public and strengthen the auto industry.

We at NHTSA look forward to working with our partners in the government, industry, consumer groups, through the WP 29 process in Geneva, or with our friends here in Tokyo.

I thank you for this opportunity and am happy to take questions.