

**Remarks Prepared for**  
**David Strickland, Administrator**  
**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**  
**For**  
**NRG Electric vehicle Event**  
**November 18, 2010**  
**Houston, Texas**

Good afternoon.

It is a pleasure to be here and to be a part of this exciting event. Thank you, David for the invitation to join you. I'd like to extend a special greeting to General Jones and Mayor Parker.

Events like this one reinforce my optimism about the future. At the Department of Transportation and across the Government, we're working with our partners to address the interrelated problems of climate change, national security, and job creation.

The United States is poised to lead the world in the development of innovative technologies and manufacturing, to enhance energy security, and to improve the environment through the development of a new generation of cleaner, more efficient cars and trucks.

We have already taken large steps in this direction. At NHTSA and the Department, we think electric vehicles have an important role to play in our continued goal of increasing fuel efficiency and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. We fully support President Obama's goal of putting one million plug-in hybrid vehicles on the road by 2015.

There will be a number of fuel technologies and strategies that the nation will be undertaking over the next several years. The integration of plugin hybrids, range extender electrics and full battery electric vehicles will not only require technological innovation, but innovation to transition the American public into different approaches as to how they drive, plan their daily travel, and fuel these vehicles.

The long term success of electric vehicles in the national fleet is dependent on acceptance of these technologies by consumers who never considered electric vehicles as a choice before. This is the challenge. And that challenge must be met by a number of partners. At the Federal level, state level, local level, and with private businesses. The pilot project here in Houston is a great example of how these partnerships and innovative thinking are taking on the challenges to encourage consumers to embrace this new and for many very unfamiliar technology.

Speaking from the federal perspective, the President has proposed a transformative transportation policy that sets the national framework for the future.

The Nation's first Livable Communities Initiative, developed by the Department of Transportation in coordination with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency, will measurably enhance the quality of life for families, workers, and communities across America.

This translates into Federal support for more transportation choices, more public transportation, and more commercial and residential

development around transportation hubs, using roads, rail, transit and more choices to walk or bike to your destination.

With this national framework in place, efforts made at the vehicle level will be that much more effective. And of course, that extends to how we power our cars.

NHTSA, working with the Environmental Protection Agency, delivered on the President'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 issued the final rule on April 1.

That rule set the first-ever national program that harmonized fuel economy and greenhouse gas standards for light-duty vehicles for model years 2012 through 2016 – an historic step in addressing the transportation sector's largest contributor to oil consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The impact is huge – light-duty vehicles are responsible for about 60 percent of U.S. transportation petroleum consumption.

Although very important, that was just the first step. We're working to advance the second-phase joint rulemaking for light-duty vehicles. The President directed NHTSA and EPA to work with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to begin a process for evaluating vehicle technologies and vehicle manufacturer capabilities to improve fuel efficiency for passenger fleet for model years 2017 to 2025.

To meet this objective, NHTSA, EPA, and CARB have met with a wide range of stakeholders, including automobile manufacturers, labor unions, environmental organizations, and others, as part of the process to create a technological assessment and to seek their views about our future regulations.

NHTSA and EPA have now issued a Notice of Intent to begin developing new standards for future light-duty vehicles. Together with

the State of California, the two agencies also released an Interim Joint Technical Assessment Report.

The technology assessment considers electric vehicles – including hybrid electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, and Battery Electric Vehicles. It identifies how electric vehicles can be an important part of the vehicle mix that will likely be used to meet more stringent fuel economy and GHG emission standards in the future.

As we continue to develop policies and strategies to encourage electric vehicles as part of the national fuel economy strategy, I would like to talk to you about NHTSA's role in the partnership to support the electrification of the fleet.

The President has called on the Department of Energy, in coordination with the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency, to work with stakeholders and develop voluntary standards, promote the deployment of advanced technology vehicles, and standardize electric vehicle infrastructure.

Then there is the safety aspect. In addition to being responsible for fuel economy regulation, NHTSA has primary responsibility for vehicle safety. The core value in NHTSA's mission is the protection of the American public, and I take that mission very seriously.

So it will come as no surprise when I tell you we believe safety is one of the key measures of success of electrified passenger vehicle technologies. Safety will be crucial in all modes of operation, whether during charging – both at home and at commercial facilities – during normal driving, or during inevitable crash events.

It is also imperative to consider how adding a significant number of very quiet to silent vehicles in the fleet impacts pedestrian safety, especially since there is a focused effort as a part of the Livable Communities Initiative to encourage walking and biking as vigorous transportation alternatives. We are working with and encouraging the manufacturers to address these silent vehicle issues in a way that makes the vehicles

identifiable while not adding to the noise pollution that affects so many cities.

We know that in the next few years, lithium-ion batteries will be the primary electric storage device in electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. Safety issues associated with lithium-ion chemistries are different from those associated with other fuels and technologies. We are conducting research to better understand and address these risks in anticipation of the roll-out of the electrified fleet in the near future.

We have a dedicated effort in our Vehicle Safety Research group conducting a detailed Failure Analysis approach. Together with industry and academia, the group is also working to establish future safety performance measures and criteria.

We are also partnering with intergovernmental groups to tackle a wide range of related issues. For example, the Lithium Battery Technical/Safety Group combines the experiences of many sister Federal agencies – NASA, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, the CIA, the FBI, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Federal Aviation Administration.

We are actively involved in efforts with other safety focused industry groups and experts. For example, we are working with the Society of Automotive Engineers on battery and charger safety, and grid interface standardization and safety. We are also working with the U.S. Advanced Battery Consortium, and the Underwriters Laboratory.

So that is the view from the top down. I believe we are putting the right framework in place to strengthen our Nation and our industry. The Department of Transportation will play an active role in helping the United States lead the world in the emerging fields of new technologies – including electric vehicles and the safety thereof.

We view these as exciting and promising opportunities for protecting consumer safety, strengthening the economy, and making continued progress toward protecting the environment. Thank you.