

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

**NASA Report on Unintended Acceleration in Toyota**  
**Vehicles, Press Event**

**Washington, DC**

**February 8, 2011**

**Good afternoon. As you have already heard, NASA's report on Unintended Acceleration of Toyota vehicles represents months of precise and exhaustive work by NASA and NHTSA engineers. NASA has delivered outstanding work and, like Secretary LaHood, I want to personally thank them for their dedication and passion for this project.**

**The NASA findings, observations, and recommendations, coupled with NHTSA's own work point to several actions we can take now, to lessen the risk of unintended acceleration in the automotive fleet. It also suggests longer term, areas where we can strengthen the agency's ability to address the safety of electronic control systems.**

**Short-term we will consider initiating at least three rulemakings: 1) to require brake override systems; 2). to standardize operation of keyless ignition systems; and, 3) to require the installation of event data recorders in all passenger vehicles.**

**First, Brake override systems help prevent or lessen unintended acceleration incidents by assigning priority to the braking system over the throttle. As noted in this report, brake override systems – and I quote – “provide a broad overarching defense against unintended engine power” from a wide range of causes—not just unintended acceleration.**

**Second, keyless ignition systems can exacerbate unintended acceleration incidents if, for example, the driver cannot quickly shut off the engine.**

**And, third, crash investigators can mine event data recorders for information relevant to unintended acceleration incidents that result in crashes.**

**For the longer term, NHTSA will also begin broad research on the reliability of electronic control systems so that we can continue to ensure future generations of vehicles are safe. With vehicles becoming increasingly reliant on electronic control systems, our knowledge in this area is critical. We will also make sure our staff continues to be well informed about emerging technologies and that we hire staff with the needed expertise.**

**We will give full consideration to NASA's findings and observations, including their suggestion that we improve dashboard warnings for safety-critical vehicle issues and that we evaluate vulnerabilities in software designs. And on NASA's recommendation, we will look to other industries for best practices for managing safety critical functions. Work already done by the railroad, aerospace, military, and medical sectors can provide us technical guidance for our own industry.**

**As mentioned, the National Academy of Sciences panel studying unintended acceleration and electronic control systems across the fleet will offer recommendations on these subjects. We look forward to their analysis – and we wish to enhance our own understanding of the subject area.**

**Today I am also announcing that NHTSA will begin research on the placement and design of accelerator and brake pedals, as well as human factors research such as how drivers use throttle and brake pedals.**

**Pedal misapplication occurs in vehicles across the industry, and we want to know whether these types of incidents can be reduced through better pedal placement and design.**

**Along with NASA, we plan to brief the National Academy of Sciences panel soon on these findings by our two agencies.**

**Finally, I want to remind the American public that we are dedicated to their safety. We want to serve you.**

**We want to hear from you. And we want to keep you informed. I want to encourage everyone to visit our website, [Safercar.gov](http://Safercar.gov), where you can not only report problems and find information about recalls, but you can sign up to be notified about safety recalls that affect your vehicles, tires, and child safety seats.**

**The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has the most active defect investigation program in the world, and last we had an unusually large number of recalls due to NHTSA's work and the willingness of manufacturers to identify problems early, as the law requires.**

**As Secretary LaHood said, highway and traffic safety is more than the name of our agency or the object of our mission. It is the serious responsibility with which the American people have entrusted us.**

**Thank you. ###**