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**SECRETARY PEÑA ASKS MOTORISTS
TO KEEP THEIR LIGHTS ON DEC. 15 AS
REMINDER OF SAFE AND SOBER DRIVING**

Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today asked all motorists to drive with their headlights turned on Dec. 15 in remembrance of victims of drunk driving crashes.

"Lights on for Life" Day is part of the annual observance of National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month.

At a news conference in Washington, D.C., Secretary Peña said, "By taking this symbolic action of driving with headlights on, we demonstrate our commitment to reducing deaths and injuries caused by those who drive impaired by alcohol or illegal drugs. Drunk driving deaths have been reduced by 15 percent in the last three years, but the battle is far from over."

Secretary Peña was joined by D.C. Police Chief Larry Soulsby, Mothers Against Drunk Driving President Katherine Prescott, International Association of Chiefs of Police President David Walchak, State and Provincial Police General Chairman Lloyd Jennings, and Recording Artists Against Drunk Driving Chairman David Niven Jr.

"Because of the parties and celebrations traditionally held during the holidays, it's especially important to focus attention on the impaired driving problem. This year, we are paying special attention to the young adult drinking drivers, particularly 21- to 34-year-old males, who are responsible for more alcohol-related crashes than any other age group," Secretary Peña said.

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"Lights on for Life" begins the Dec. 15-17 "National Holiday Lifesaver Weekend," during which state, municipal and sheriff law enforcement officers will encourage motorists to observe all traffic safety laws, especially those involving alcohol, speeding and safety belt use, according to Ricardo Martinez, M.D., administrator of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Dr. Martinez explained that to help build the seasonal awareness of the consequences of drunk driving, the agency is releasing a study by the Harvard School of Public Health, that profiles those who chronically drink and drive, together with strategies to reach these high-risk drivers.

"In 1994, 16,600 people died in alcohol-related crashes. That is a 15 percent decline just since 1991, when the toll was 19,887. Tough state laws and local ordinances, educational efforts and publicity have changed attitudes and behavior throughout the United States," said Dr. Martinez, a board-certified emergency physician. Still, NHTSA estimates that at the present rate, about two in every five Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.

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**National Highway
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