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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
DELIVERY OF FORD AIRBAG CARS
WASHINGTON, D. C.
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This is a special day. It gives those of us at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Department of Transportation generally another opportunity to underscore our strong commitment to safety. We are delighted to join GSA in purchasing this fleet of Ford cars equipped with airbags. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has paid the cost of equipping five thousand 1985 Tempo sedans with airbags. We hope this program will encourage manufacturers to make this technology available in the marketplace to anyone who wants to buy it.

It is very important to remember that this fleet is also equipped with safety belts. We will encourage all those who use these cars to buckle up. Through the safety belt and the airbag, they can receive the most effective occupant protection available.

As this fleet of cars is put to use by government agencies, we will have an invaluable opportunity to gather data on the ability of airbags to protect auto occupants in crashes. We hope these cars will never be involved in an accident, but if they are, NHTSA investigators will be dispatched to analyze it. We already know airbags can save lives and prevent injuries -- but these cars will add more information on how they work in "real world" situations.

In addition to better protecting our employees, gathering still more information and providing incentives for manufacturers, we hope this fleet purchase will encourage private businesses to follow suit. We are proud to be working with GSA in showing how the government can use its purchasing power to promote advances in safety. Companies who purchase fleets of cars equipped with airbags will find it is a worthwhile investment -- an investment in lives and health.

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