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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Contact: Jennifer Hillings  
Tele.: (202) 426-4570

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY  
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE  
AT THE 16TH ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE HIGHWAY USERS FEDERATION FOR SAFETY AND MOBILITY  
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WASHINGTON, D.C.

I've been looking forward to being with you today, to thank you for all you've done and to look forward together to the challenges that remain. The Highway Users Federation continually serves as a strong voice to promote highway safety, preservation and improvement. This group and its leaders have rendered outstanding service in past campaigns to encourage safety belt usage, combat the scourge of drunk drivers, and support a wide range of community-based safety programs. For all that the membership of this organization has done, I am deeply grateful.

But today, my purpose is to look ahead, to what we must do together in the months to come. I am here to describe several initiatives on which I have been working with John Clements and others from your membership. John is a proven national transportation leader -- especially in the area of highways and highway safety -- and he was one of the individuals who was most helpful when we worked together to secure a clean "ICE" bill.

The initiatives I want to outline today are designed to make what is the finest system of highways in the world, better yet. Most of all, I am here today to offer leadership in enhancing truck safety along four million miles of American roads.

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It's been said that a journey of ten thousand miles must begin with a single step. The journey which we must travel together, now and in the months to come, will involve many steps, taken on many fronts. One such step was the introduction of legislation yesterday to designate the week of January 26 as National Truck and Bus Safety Week. I harbor no illusions about the long-range impact of such observances -- but I am convinced that they can serve to educate, heighten public awareness, and promote legislative responsibility.

During the final week of September, the Department -- in cooperation with the states participating in the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program and those member states of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance -- conducted a nationwide joint inspection of commercial trucks. For the first time, all inspectors -- federal and state -- used the same inspection procedures and vehicle safety criteria, providing nationwide uniformity, increased efficiency and a greater focus on important safety problems. What we found gives cause for concern. Some 41 percent of all vehicles inspected by state personnel were grounded by serious defects, another 15 percent of all drivers were put out of service due to improper documentation and log book problems. These numbers are not final. Even so, they suggest the dimensions of a problem we can hardly ignore.

Meanwhile, there is another serious problem we must address, namely the fact that in 20 of our states, any person who is licensed to drive an automobile can also legally drive a tractor-trailer without first meeting any formal state training, testing or operator licensing requirements. Quite frankly, this is outrageous. It should worry any American who drives or rides as a passenger on the same roads shared with tractor-trailer vehicles.

Nor does this exhaust my concerns. What about the ease with which drivers can obtain multiple licenses and records to match? In fact, we have evidence that some drivers -- including truck and bus drivers -- may possess licenses in several states at the same time. Why? To hide accidents and traffic violations and avoid state enforcement action, such as license revocation. The National Transportation Safety Board has found that three separate levels of commercial driver screening notwithstanding, states continue to license problem drivers to operate heavy trucks.

Consider the case of the tractor-trailer which struck -- from the rear -- three parked vehicles. The truck driver had two driver's licenses in his possession: one from Colorado and one from New York. His Colorado license had two violations: one for failing to observe a traffic sign and one for speeding. His license issued from New York was under suspension. The co-driver also had two driver's licenses in her possession: one from the State of Louisiana, containing a speeding violation, and one from Kansas, currently suspended because of no fewer than six moving violations. The truck driver and three other people died in the accident. His co-driver and a second person were injured.

In another case, no less tragic, a truck passed a stopped school bus displaying its flashing lights and struck and killed a child, who had just left the bus. The driver of this particular truck carried two licenses: one from Pennsylvania with a record of 10 violations, presently suspended, and another from Virginia, with no record of violations. These are but two examples of what can and does happen when unqualified or unsafe drivers are permitted to travel our highways. These are examples of what you and I must move vigorously to clear from the roads of America -- now, before they kill or injure more innocent victims.

The Department has already begun acting to make trucks and buses safer. Recently, I gave the motor carrier safety program within the Federal Highway Administration a stronger internal voice by appointing Dick Landis -- for many years a senior Highway Patrol Commander in Arizona's Department of Public Safety -- to the newly created position of Associate Administrator for Motor Carriers. Our regional offices around the country will now report directly to Dick, who brings extensive experience in state truck safety issues to this new and vitally important position.

One of Dick's first priorities is to take necessary steps to increase safety enforcement activities at the state and local levels to identify unsafe drivers and vehicles. These day-to-day operations are more efficiently conducted at the community -- rather than the national -- level. We are eager to provide the assistance -- through federal funds and training -- to local people who are out there every day conducting inspections, to officials who are more knowledgeable about the conditions in their own communities, who make sure the work is done and who follow a historic American tradition of state control over state roads.

Yes, the states have a crucial role -- in administering driver licensing programs, truck safety inspection and enforcement through the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program known as MCSAP and, of course, through normal safety activities entrusted to state police. At the same time, the federal government has its work cut out for it, if we are to achieve more uniform enforcement nationwide. To Washington falls responsibility for better data collection and safety audits, which in turn can define broad patterns of violations. The federal government must provide the tools to help the states get the job done, such as civil penalty actions against persistent violators and effective federal safety regulations.

Another important tool to bolster state enforcement efforts is SAFETYNET, designed by DOT in 1983. SAFETYNET's data base system will make available to state enforcement agencies the BMCS's motor carrier census, safety ratings and enforcement history. It will also act as a repository for information gathered by the states. That information will be available to computer terminals in state agency offices. Even now, there are four states testing the system. And within this fiscal year, we expect to see funding eligibility for necessary hardware and software -- with SAFETYNET fully operational in all 50 states within the next three to five years.

I have referred to MCSAP. In order to strengthen our nationwide truck safety system, the Administration called for a state Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program as part of the milestone highway legislation of 1982. Rather than building a federal police force, we sought to expand state efforts. Under MCSAP, states that enforce federal or compatible state motor carrier and hazardous materials regulations may be reimbursed for up to 80 percent of the cost of expanding these programs. In turn, BMCS personnel and resources can be redirected to audit problem carriers identified by state terminal and roadside inspections, to train state inspectors and to bring civil enforcement penalties against persistent violators.

Since the program began last year, over 2,100 state inspectors have been trained and an additional 650 inspectors have completed courses in the safe transportation of hazardous materials. We expect to train another 500 state inspectors and 250 more hazardous materials inspectors -- for a total of 3,500 new inspectors by the end of September 1986. In short, we're getting results. We are finding out what and where the problems are.

State officials are not just pinpointing the problems; they are fixing them. They are giving federal auditors help in identifying repeat offenders. And I will request a 150 percent increase in funding for the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program in fiscal year 1987. I am seeking an authorization of \$50 million and will make all of this money available to the states, for I believe the states are now ready to put those funds to work. They have, overall, completed the development of programs and are ready for the more costly implementation stage. Equally important, I am asking that these funds be available on a contract authority basis. This will give MCSAP added stability by assuring multi-year funding. It will give states the assurance they need for long-term planning and hiring.

With this increased funding, starting in 1987 the focus will change from recruiting and training to increasing the states' presence on the highways. This will lead to two million additional roadside inspections and 10,000 safety compliance audits of intrastate motor carrier companies.

And I have directed the Federal Highway Administration to step up the emphasis on hazardous materials transportation in its administration of the MCSAP program. While the safety record in this field generally has been excellent, there are no laurels to be rested upon -- not while the potential remains for a single disastrous accident.

Fortunately, the Department has already taken a big first step by fostering state enforcement capability with our recent and highly successful State Hazardous Materials Enforcement Development Program. Today, through the efforts of some 25 state participants, we have been able to dedicate resources, guidance, and training support toward enhanced safety and improved enforcement procedures. In the process, states have demonstrated their own capacity to more effectively enforce hazardous materials regulations, achieve a greater sharing of the data needed for enforcement purposes and move closer to regulatory uniformity.

To maintain and hopefully accelerate the momentum generated by this program, I have asked Cindy Douglass and the Research and Special Programs Administration, its original sponsor, to hold a series of four regional workshops early next year. These workshops, held in conjunction with BMCS, will enable federal and state officials responsible for hazardous materials transportation to identify solutions to enforcement, training, routing and emergency response problems.

Meanwhile, I want to make sure we are organized to make the best possible use of newly allocated resources. My Safety Review Task Force, which has released reports on the Federal Aviation Administration and the Federal Railroad Administration, is now reviewing the Federal Highway Administration, with a particular emphasis on motor carrier safety. It will report back to me on what, if any, further steps need to be taken. I am going to take a hard look at our method of auditing and whom we audit -- and if additional resources are required, we will use them.

Nor will I wait before tackling the issue of problem bus drivers. The Department is scheduling a series of strategy meetings, also in January, to plan a federal/state inspection of the nation's bus fleet. Those states in MCSAP, as well as those in the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance along with BMCS, are targeting the safety of commercial bus operations in an intensified inspection effort of passenger carriers. It will be nationwide in its scope.

To improve the Department's ability to enforce federal motor carrier laws, the Motor Carrier Safety Act of 1984 provided for civil penalties of up to \$10,000 for each truck safety violation which could lead to a serious injury or death. Thanks to the leadership of Senator Jack Danforth -- a pioneer in motor carrier safety -- and Representatives Bud Shuster and Glenn Anderson, Congress wisely provided the Department with this civil penalty authority. And I will not hesitate to use this authority to get deficient vehicles and negligent drivers off the roads and highways. Already, the Department has begun to assess civil penalties. Such violations are not isolated human errors. Rather they are patterns of equipment violations or operating conduct that any responsible business could detect and correct if it were properly fulfilling its safety responsibility to the public. I am pleased to note that this vital legislation was supported by many in the room today.

Another key element is a comprehensive review of BMCS regulations for trucks and commercial buses. And by mid-1986, I look forward to completion of this review, ranging from drivers' hours of service and general driving rules, to parts and accessories requirements, inspection, repair and maintenance of vehicles, safety fitness determinations that will apply to all carriers, and notification and reporting of all accidents. We are also considering more stringent qualifications for those who transport hazardous materials. I assure you this review will have my close scrutiny and I have asked the Chairman of my Safety Review Task Force to personally monitor its progress. It will not be "business as usual."

Just this past September, I proposed new rules to improve the safety of tank trucks that carry hazardous gases and liquids, including gasoline. These rules, which are now in the comment period, would require that a large segment of the nation's fleet of truck cargo tanks be retrofitted with stronger manhole cover assemblies and improved pressure relief valves. This will reduce substantially the risk of fire, major leakage and other problems in overturn accidents. At the same time, tighter requirements for maintenance, repair and inspection will further improve the quality and safety of cargo tanks. We will move expeditiously, upon the closing of the comment period, to analyze these comments and finalize the rules.

Trucking companies, of course, also share responsibility for ensuring that their drivers are well trained. Therefore, the Department has just issued a proposed minimum federal standard for training tractor trailer drivers. Unfortunately, there has been no such standard until now. We believe that development of such standards is a major step toward instilling the basic knowledge and skills required to operate these large vehicles safely. And by mid-December, the Government Printing Office will have copies of the model curriculum -- which contains a complete, ready to teach, 320-hour course.

The inspection and enforcement programs I have discussed this morning are crucial to our safety efforts. But they alone will not suffice, not so long as there is an inherent problem in the licensing system in this country. In truth, the state driver licensing systems are the only programs which reach all drivers routinely and, in most states, at regular intervals. These systems stand out for their potential to manage at least somewhat the general driving population, as well as identified problem and impaired drivers.

Currently, 31 states have some form of classified licensing system. Thirty states and the District of Columbia have joined the Driver License Compact, an association of states which have agreed to support the concept of one license and one record for each driver and to provide license records to member states. The compact is a major step forward, but each of us in this room committed to truck safety must tackle this problem. After all, offenses such as drunk or reckless driving, or deaths caused by accidents are no less serious for being committed in a jurisdiction other than the driver's home state!

This abuse signals a crucial need for all states to have single and classified licensing systems. This is appropriate as a state responsibility, but the Department and the private sector must join together to educate the public to encourage state governments to enact legislation to implement these systems -- now.

Recently, we discussed this problem with representatives of the private sector, including the Highway Users Federation, the American Trucking Associations, the Private Truck Council of America and the Teamsters. I am

pleased to report they all are eager to join our efforts in support of single and classified licensing.

The next step in that process is the big one -- development of a national coalition with affiliates in target states. With the resources of my office, and those of the entire Department solidly behind this effort, let us, here today, commit ourselves to urge states to take seriously their responsibility to improve highway safety... by acting now... to ensure that only qualified drivers operate the nation's trucks and buses, to guarantee that violators are taken off our highways, that they are no longer permitted to hide behind multiple licenses. We can no longer sit by and allow needless deaths to occur at the hands of drivers who, by any standard, have forfeited their right behind the wheel.

I am delighted that you have agreed to cosponsor, along with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), a one-day workshop devoted to licensing issues. During the workshop, private and public sector organizations across the board -- such as the Department, the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures and trucking groups -- will be working to create a more effective driver licensing system and to encourage full participation by the states in the Driver Licensing Compact. For my part, I am writing to every Governor in the nation, informing them of our efforts and urging them to strongly support the adoption of classified driver license systems. In a few days, I will also meet with the Executive Committee of the Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators to discuss truck safety issues and urge the adoption of single and classified license systems. And I'll be meeting early next month with the Council of State Governments to talk with leaders at the state level to enlist their support in this important effort.

I want to point out that there is one group whose commitment and support to truck safety has been second to none -- the trucking industry itself. Just last month, the American Trucking Associations launched an impressive -- and comprehensive -- driver safety program. I was delighted to welcome ATA's President, Tom Donohue, as a member of our National Motor Carrier Advisory Committee, and I appreciate the opportunity to work with Tom, whose dedication and determination are unquestioned. And I want to commend other groups for their efforts, represented by all of you here today.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a problem to address. And I want you to know how much I care about this and how dedicated I am to resolving it -- with your input and your assistance. How often is it that any of us have the kind of opportunity, before us now, to make such a positive difference for people?

There is no one easy answer to the problem of truck safety, and we can't fix it overnight. But what we do know is that you can't do it alone and we can't do it alone. I welcome your suggestions and ideas and I look forward to the opportunity to work with you. Only together can we

comprehensively address the issue of truck safety and make our roads safer for all our citizens. An extensive, combined effort of federal involvement, state enforcement, private sector initiatives and public concern is sure to win results.

Together, we can convey the importance of our message to all users of our highways. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your hard work and your commitment. I rely on your support.

Thank you very much.

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