



**REMARKS FOR CARL T. JOHNSON
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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SARA TITLE III PROGRAM OFFICIALS
ANNUAL MEETING
SAVANNAH, GA
-- APRIL 8, 2008 --**

Thank you Tim for that wonderful introduction and to each of you in the audience for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.

It's hard to imagine that today is the first time an Administrator from the Department of Transportation is addressing your stakeholder group.

You each play a vital role in helping us achieve our safety mission of enhancing public safety, security and environmental protection. And because we at the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) recognize that, I really wanted to be here to discuss ways we can further work together to improve the safe transportation of hazardous materials.

I want to thank Charlie Rogoff for informing me of this important occasion.

On behalf of the Bush Administration, Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, and PHMSA, your support, assistance and commitment in serving as our partners are greatly appreciated.

Secretary Peters has made it clear that safety is the Department's number one priority. This is a priority I am all too familiar with since safety has been the focus of my life for the past 20 years as President of the Compressed Gas Association – the safety and standards organization for the industrial and medical gases industry. A position I retired from in April of last year.

Returning to full-time employment as PHMSA Administrator has given me the chance to lead an agency with the best possible mission. And what a capstone this has been for a career in safety.

PHMSA's first Administrator and now Deputy Secretary of Transportation, Admiral Thomas Barrett, instilled a vision for successful PHMSA-stakeholder relationships that embraced many organizations, including each of you. My intent is to build upon PHMSA's efforts to achieve the Secretary's goals and improve hazardous materials and pipeline transportation safety and security.

PHMSA oversees the safe and secure movement of over 1.2 million daily movements of hazardous materials through the air; on the railroads, seas and waterways; and over the highways. Large volumes of the hazmat we oversee also move by pipelines, out of the view of most Americans.

It is important that our communities, as well as the workers engaged in hazardous materials commerce, are able to count on the safe and secure transport of these shipments.

Currently, more than 3 billion tons of regulated hazardous materials – including explosive, poisonous, corrosive, flammable, and radioactive materials – are transported each year. And while it is easy for the public to get the wrong impression when they hear the term “hazardous materials,” in reality, we are talking about materials that are essential to our citizens and our economy.

Hazardous materials fuel automobiles, heat and cool our homes and offices, and are used in farming, medical applications, manufacturing, mining, and other industrial and food processes. Shipments of hazardous materials frequently move through populated or sensitive areas where an accident could result in loss of life, serious injury, or significant environmental damage.

To deal with this enormous task, PHMSA applies a systems-based approach to assess and manage safety related risk, especially those risks that change over time. We utilize data to analyze results, make the best decisions, and deploy our attention and resources against the greatest risks – worst first.

While we take our regulatory oversight responsibilities at the Department of Transportation very seriously, we also recognize that regulation alone is not enough to fulfill our safety mission. This is why it is important for us to continue to build on our enterprise strategy by strengthening our relationships with you and other PHMSA stakeholders. We want to solidify our partnership with you because we all need to recognize the important changes that are occurring in our global environment.

With American businesses creating new technologies containing complex chemical compounds and products, we must consider their implications on emergency responders. These new chemicals pose very unique emergency response challenges. Only by working together to understand them can we be ready to help communities prepare. Our concern is less “if” these new products can be moved safely, but “how” – and how can we contribute to making it happen easier and sooner.

PHMSA is refocusing its efforts to help build the capability of State and local government emergency response capabilities. The increased relocation of manufacturing facilities to rural areas and their complex chemicals will cause us to rely on your help in these areas more than ever.

While we have made great progress in improving safety and reducing deaths nationally, these gains have not translated to the nation's rural areas. To address this growing safety problem, Secretary Peters has implemented a new national strategy focused on improving rural safety through the supply of new resources and technologies.

The Department's Rural Safety Initiative is designed to bring a new focus and a comprehensive approach to encourage safer drivers, better and smarter roads, better trained emergency responders, and stronger partnerships to help improve safety on America's rural roads.

PHMSA's hazardous materials emergency preparedness (HMEP) grants program supports the Department's Rural Safety Initiative by providing the resources needed to train emergency responders and help rural communities effectively respond to hazardous materials transportation emergencies. This year, PHMSA's emergency preparedness grant target amounts have increased by approximately 70 percent from \$12.8 million to \$28 million.

Ensuring the safety and preparedness of America's emergency responders is an important part of PHMSA's and the Department's mission. We are constantly seeking ways to improve our hazmat safety programs. We emphasize doing so in a transparent manner, with the benefit of stakeholder input to produce practical approaches suited to the demands of an economy that depends on the efficient movement of hazardous materials. The PHMSA "Enterprise Approach" to solving problems involves not only coming together with other Federal agencies or State and Local governments, but also our industry partners - - and all working together to enhance safety.

We must focus and prioritize our efforts on preventing incidents that pose the greatest overall risk to the public, property, and the environment, and moderate the consequences of incidents that cannot be prevented.

As we move along, we will always welcome input from our stakeholders to tell us if we're headed in the right direction. We have learned that we can multiply the success of our efforts to improve safety by sharing responsibility and accomplishments with our stakeholders, both within the federal family, and the members you represent. With your insight and input, we can continue to ensure that key transportation safety programs, and the issues surrounding them, get the attention they deserve. Together, we can keep the nation's hazmat moving safely, and move our economy to new heights.

All of us at PHMSA and across the Department of Transportation stand ready and willing to work with you, and are proud to be your partners in hazmat safety.

REMARKS

JOHNSON – NASTTPO Annual Meeting

Thank you again for having me today.

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