

Safety

Transportation safety is the Department of Transportation's top strategic priority. Because the human toll and economic cost of transportation accidents are massive, sustaining continuous progress in improving transportation safety is the first objective of all DOT operations. Evaluations using the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) support DOT's decision to retain safety as the number one strategic objective and forms the foundation for much of this resource request.

The FY 2006 budget request proposes overall transportation safety funding of \$15.5 billion. This request will fund the aviation and surface transportation safety programs and initiatives of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

Surface Transportation Safety

In 2003, an estimated 42,643 lives were lost in traffic crashes. The economic cost of motor vehicle crashes is estimated to be more than \$230 billion annually. Within DOT, FMCSA and NHTSA are the two operating administrations primarily focused on regulating highway safety, and FHWA supports highway safety through its infrastructure programs. Almost exclusively, FRA's focus is on improving the railroad safety record, and PHMSA's focus is on hazardous material (hazmat) and pipeline safety.

- ❖ Improve Motor Vehicle and Driver Safety. In 2003, the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle-miles traveled experienced the largest drop since 1999, falling to 1.48. Early estimates for 2004 show a further improvement in the highway fatality rate, dropping to 1.45. OMB's PART review for NHTSA's operations and research program indicated that steady progress has been made in reducing highway fatalities, which is evidenced by the 2003 statistics. While progress has been made, NHTSA will continue to focus on two significant areas to further reduce the overall highway fatality rate to 1.0 per 100 million vehicle-miles traveled by 2008: (1) increasing safety belt usage from 69 percent in 1998 to 82 percent in 2006, depending on how many additional States pass primary safety belt laws; and (2) reducing the rate of fatalities in high blood alcohol concentration (BAC 0.08 or above) crashes per 100 million vehicle-miles traveled from 0.61 in 1996 to 0.51 in 2006. The FY 2006 budget request includes \$229.4 million for NHTSA safety operations and research programs, and \$465 million for grants to States for targeted highway safety programs to counter drugged and drunk driving and to enforce safety belt use. This funding level is consistent with the Administration's Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA) proposal to consolidate NHTSA highway safety grant programs to the States. The Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) will continue its efforts, in concert with the Department of Energy, to develop safe hydrogen fuel infrastructure and vehicles for transportation use.
- ❖ Safer and Smarter Highway and Intersection Infrastructure. FHWA's FY 2006 safety request of \$4.3 billion continues the Administration's policy of providing increased flexibility in safety funding to the States to tailor their resources to address unique factors that impact highway safety, such as highway design and operation. These funds also enable FHWA to increase its research focus on safety and concentrate efforts on reducing the number of fatalities in three types of crashes: roadway departures, crashes at or near intersections, and collisions involv-

ing pedestrians. Roadway departures, including run off-the-road and head-on crashes, accounted for over 25,000 fatalities in 2003. Safer and smarter highway and intersection design and operation will remove roadside hazards and help keep vehicles on the roadway. Approximately 9,200 fatal crashes occurred in 2003 between vehicles in collisions at intersections. FHWA will continue to promote the use of comprehensive intersection design and operational tools and enforcement strategies, and will assist States in improving intersection safety problems at specific locations. Approximately 4,800 pedestrians are killed each year in collisions with one or more vehicles. To counter this trend, FHWA will continue to target crash causes in major urban areas and select rural locations and facilitate community-based programs that fully and safely accommodate pedestrians.

- ❖ Improve Motor Carrier Safety. OMB's FY 2005 PART review for FMCSA's safety grant program indicated that steady progress has been made in reducing truck-related fatalities. Further, the FY 2006 PART review for FMCSA's safety and operations programs found that FMCSA has continued to achieve reductions in the rate of fatalities involving large trucks. The large truck-related fatality rate in 2003 was 2.31 fatalities per 100 million truck vehicle-miles traveled (TVMT), which is 18 percent lower than the baseline rate of 2.81 fatalities per 100 million TVMT, established in 1996. Further, FMCSA's progress in reducing injuries in crashes involving trucks continues to be very significant. Estimates of 2003 truck-related injuries - 122,000 - represent a 7 percent decrease from 2002, and are the lowest level since 1995. The large truck injury rate of 55 per 100 million truck-miles is at the lowest level since injury data have been collected. Aggressive enforcement, FMCSA's primary safety mitigation strategy, has proven effective in reducing crashes, fatalities, hazardous materials releases, and injuries. Consistent with the Administration's SAFETEA proposal, the budget request of \$465 million includes \$233 million for Motor Carrier Safety Operations and Programs to support critical motor carrier program activities to reduce crashes, save lives, and prevent injuries on our Nation's highways. The request also includes \$232 million for Motor Carrier Safety Grants to maintain aggressive State enforcement of interstate commercial truck and bus regulations as part of a Federal-State partnership aimed at meeting the Department's strategic goals and performance targets.
- ❖ Improve Railroad Safety. OMB's FY 2005 PART review of FRA's rail safety program showed that this program is well managed and is making good progress in achieving rail safety goals. The FY 2006 PART review of its Research and Development program, with goals that also support safety, furthered these findings. The FY 2006 budget request for FRA safety includes \$151.7 million to support FRA's efforts to reduce rail accidents and incidents to 16.8 per million train-miles in FY 2006. By reducing accidents and incidents, fatalities, injuries, and serious rail hazardous materials incidents will also be avoided. The funds requested in FY 2006 will provide two new safety positions to provide an inspection function at tank car repair facilities, provide additional support in FRA's Research and Development program, and direct significant funding in the installation of the Nationwide Differential Global Positioning System for the continental United States.
- ❖ Improve Transit Safety. Public transit is one of the safest modes of transportation per passenger-mile traveled. The challenge is to further reduce the rate of fatalities and injuries, even as the total number of people using transit increases. To help meet this challenge, the President's budget requests more than \$16 million for FTA safety oversight, research projects, and associated administrative costs. Continuing to fund transit safety will support efforts to keep transit

fatalities at or below 0.477 per 100 million transit passenger-miles traveled in FY 2006. These funds will also contribute to reducing the rate of transit-related injuries and incidents.

- ❖ Improve Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety. OMB's FY 2005 PART review of PHMSA's (formerly Research and Special Programs Administration) hazardous materials safety grant assistance program showed that this program is well-managed and making progress in achieving hazardous materials safety goals. Similarly, the FY 2006 PART review for PHMSA's pipeline safety program found that the program is effectively managed. In FY 2006, \$103.8 million is requested for PHMSA to support efforts to reduce the number of natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline incidents to 280 in FY 2006, and for PHMSA's share of the overall DOT performance target of achieving no more than 498 serious hazardous materials transportation incidents in FY 2006.

Aviation Safety

- ❖ Improve Aviation Safety. FAA's efforts to improve aviation safety have produced impressive results. The FY 2004 commercial air carrier accident rate of 0.021 per 100,000 departures was the lowest in history. FAA also exceeded its FY 2004 target for reducing general aviation accidents. Nevertheless, as OMB's FY 2005 PART reviews of FAA's Air Traffic Service and Research, Engineering and Development programs concluded, FAA needs to make better progress towards reducing the precursors of aircraft accidents (runway incursions and operational errors). More recently, the FY 2006 PART review for FAA Regulation and Certification found that the FAA is unable to determine if the cost of rule development is minimized at the least incremental cost. Steps are being taken to analyze the complexity of rulemakings, as well as the workload by organization, to better understand the cost of rule development and increase efficiency.

The FY 2006 budget request for FAA includes \$7.9 billion to reduce U.S. commercial air carrier fatal accidents to 0.018 per 100,000 departures in FY 2006, and to reduce all general aviation fatal accidents to 337 in FY 2006. The request supports FAA's efforts to provide the safest possible system through additional investments in personnel and airspace safety technology, including systems to reduce the most serious runway incursions to no more than 33, equivalent to a rate of 0.502 per million operations, and to reduce the most serious operational errors to no more than 618, equivalent to a rate of 3.72 per million activities. The request provides funding for inspecting aircraft, certifying new equipment, and ensuring the safety of flight procedures and the competence of airmen and women.