

## Hazardous Materials Cooperative Research Program

On August 23, 2006, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) awarded a contract to the National Academies to initiate a pilot of a Hazardous Materials Cooperative Research Program (HMCRP). The Transportation Research Board (TRB), part of the National Academies, will be responsible for managing the pilot program. The HMCRP is intended to be a stakeholder-driven, problem-solving, practical oriented, near- to mid-term research and development program advancing current knowledge and practice relating to hazardous materials transportation.

The pilot follows a concept study of a hazardous materials cooperative research program by the TRB, which was completed in March 2005. PHMSA, along with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, and the U.S. Coast Guard, sponsored the concept study. It concluded there is a demonstrable need for such a program, with a strong security component, for hazardous materials transportation.

[TRB Special Report 283](#), *“Cooperative Research for Hazardous Materials Transportation – Defining the Need, Converging on Solutions,”* documents study results.



The “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” or “SAFETEA-LU” required PHMSA to enter into a contract with the National Academies to carry out research projects called for in Special Report 283 (see Annex 4-1 on page 71 for details). Funding from the Highway Trust Fund for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2009 is authorized to carry out these projects. Approximately \$880,000 is available for FY2006. Similar amounts are expected to be provided for FY2007 through FY2009 subject to Congressional appropriations. In a letter report to Congress dated June 9, 2006, Secretary Mineta described plans to conduct hazardous materials transportation research as authorized in SAFETEA-LU while testing the concept of a cooperative hazardous materials transportation research program.

The TRB will use procedures similar to those employed in the existing National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), and Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) to provide for competitive, merit-based selection of research institutions, research project oversight, and dissemination of research results.

A TRB appointed Oversight Panel, composed of a representative group of experts in hazardous materials transportation, will be responsible for setting the priorities and allocating HMCRP resources. The Oversight Panel will formulate a plan for addressing research projects called for in Special Report 283. The plan will determine the timing and scope for the studies.

Technical panels, to be appointed by TRB, will provide technical guidance and counsel through the life of specific research projects. HMCRP panels will be appointed according to the procedures established for NCHRP, ACRP, and TCRP panels. Technical panels will include experienced practitioners and research specialists, with a mix of individuals with the relevant technical expertise from the freight transportation industry, government agencies, the private sector, and academia.

The initial milestones for the pilot program are shown in the following table. Note that this is a multi-year effort which will continue past initial project selection and execution.

### **Initial HMCRP Milestones**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
Appoint Oversight Panel	October 23, 2006
Convene Oversight Panel to Select and Prioritize Initial Projects	December 1, 2006
Appoint Technical Panels, Hold Meetings, and Solicit Initial Proposals	February 23, 2007
Evaluate Proposals and Award Initial Projects	June 23, 2007

There are many ways for stakeholders to participate in the pilot of the HMCRP. These include providing suggestions and feedback on the program and projects, serving on HMCRP panels, conducting HMCRP projects, and applying findings and recommendations from HMCRP research. Those interested are encouraged to check this website periodically for the status and further information as this effort proceeds.

The primary point of contact at the TRB for the HMCRP is Dr. Robert J. Reilly (email address: [breilly@nas.edu](mailto:breilly@nas.edu)). Additional information is provided on the [TRB website](#).