

**Remarks Prepared for Anne S. Ferro
FMCSA Administrator
Truck Writers of North America
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Introduction

Good evening. Thank you, Jami for that introduction. And, thank you for the invitation to be here.

First, I want to share a bit of personal information with you. I come from a family of journalists. Yes, both my father, brother, sister, brother-in-law and grandmother have been reporters. My family always enjoyed asking probing questions at the dinner table – we were a family always determined to get the real story of what was going on in the news and in our community. We firmly believed in the power of the free press and in the call to service by making a difference in public service.

My career path took a different turn early on. After beginning my professional work life at the Maryland General Assembly where I first became interested in transportation issues, I knew there was no turning back. I was hooked.

Since those early days, my career has been devoted to road safety. I'm proud to have served as the head of the Maryland Motor Truck Association and as Maryland's Motor Vehicle Administrator.

Agency Priorities

Although I have only been FMCSA Administrator for a brief time, I have quickly defined my personal focus for the agency and strategies which frame our work:

1. Raise the bar to enter the motor carrier industry;
2. Maintain high safety standards to remain in the industry; and
3. Remove high risk operators and behaviors from our roads and highways.

Everything FMCSA undertakes will and can be tied to these three priorities. I will describe them briefly for you.

Raise the Bar

We will be working diligently to raise the bar to entry into the motor carrier industry by building upon the review process for applicants for passenger carriers and household goods authority.

Under our vetting procedures, FMCSA thoroughly investigates whether new applicants have connections to other carriers with a history of safety violations or those against whom we have taken punitive actions.

FMCSA is committed to expanding the vetting program currently in place.

Maintain High Safety Standards

A cornerstone of our mission is making sure that all carriers, drivers and service providers who get credentials through FMCSA maintain high safety standards.

CSA 2010 will provide the road map for carriers and drivers to maintain high safety standards. We are preparing for the launch of CSA 2010 later this year. Until then, I can tell you that the one-size fits all compliance review model will be a thing of the past.

Also, hours-of service rules have been receiving a fresh look this year in preparation for a rulemaking proposal. We have held four listening sessions so far and the fifth is scheduled for tomorrow from 10 am until 6 pm.

Come to the Exposition Center, in the South Wing, Room B101.

Join us and listen if your busy schedules allow.

The feedback we receive will help us gain a better perspective when we look at research and develop a final proposal for a new rule on hours-of-service.

Remove High Risk Carriers, Drivers and Behaviors

For our third priority, we are working on many fronts to remove high risk carriers that have severe safety issues. One way we are doing this is by compiling a monthly “Top 100” list of high risk household goods carriers. We also continue to use strategic strike forces across the country to remove high risk passenger carriers.

Maintaining high standards also requires addressing irresponsible and risky behaviors, particularly driver actions that take their attention from the road and the task at hand.

In this case, we are working to eliminate distracted driving as an all too common behavior. Earlier this year, I announced our decision to use existing authority to prohibit commercial truck and bus drivers from texting while driving, using any handheld cell

phone or other device. A formal rule to ban texting is soon to follow.

Safety is a shared responsibility and our number one priority. We not only expect commercial drivers to share the road responsibly with others but we require them to do so.

Conclusion

I've given you a brief run down of my agenda and our priorities. And I am eager to gain your views on an industry you've reported on through many changes.

In your coverage on any and all of our issues, please don't hesitate to call on us. In fact when you are in Washington, please come and visit. We welcome your questions and want your readers and listeners to receive the most accurate information possible about what is going on at FMCSA.

The Obama Administration has made a solemn pledge to the American people to be open in the way we do business. This is not lip service – it is a sincere vow to serve the public in an open manner.

I welcome your questions as our issues progress and take shape.

I look forward to building a rewarding and strong relationship with each of you. Thank you.