



American Association
of Motor Vehicle
Administrators

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Recommendations for the Surface Transportation Reauthorization

The undersigned organizations support the following recommendations for the highway safety portions of the next surface transportation reauthorization legislation:

ESTABLISH NATIONAL PERFORMANCE GOAL AND STATE TARGETS

The State Highway Safety Alliance urges Congress to establish a **national** goal of halving motor vehicle fatalities by 2030 and authorize a federal program that enables state and local governments to attain that goal.

State highway safety-related agencies should set **state performance targets** in their federally-funded highway safety plans that would enable them to move toward attainment of the national goal. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) should work cooperatively with state safety-related agencies to identify performance measures with which to measure state progress. At the end of each federal fiscal year, states should report results using agreed-upon performance measures. Rather than penalizing states if they are unable to reach their safety targets within a fixed time period, the federal safety agencies and their state agency counterparts should cooperatively identify creative strategies for enhancing results at the state level.

INCREASE SAFETY FUNDING

Although progress has been made in highway safety, almost 34,000 people—more than 90 a day—were killed and 2.2 million were injured in motor vehicle crashes in 2009. Most of these crashes were preventable. Increased funding must be authorized to enable states to reverse these troubling statistics and meet national safety goals and state highway safety targets. The State Highway Safety Alliance urges Congress to increase the level of federal highway safety program funding commensurate with increases in other core programs. Increased highway safety funding for the grant programs administered by FHWA, NHTSA and FMCSA would enable states to improve safety on the roadways, address hazardous driving behavior and ensure that unsafe commercial motor vehicles are taken off the road.

STREAMLINE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND ENHANCE FLEXIBILITY

The Alliance urges Congress to **consolidate** separate categorical highway safety programs to the greatest extent possible. Federal programs should have a single application and application deadline. Congress should identify eligible activities for the consolidated funding, but states should have the **flexibility** to determine how much funding should be used for each eligible activity so that funding is

transportation

safety



targeted toward the most critical highway safety problems. Requirements on states related to Maintenance of Effort (MOE), if not dispensed with altogether, need to be simplified and made so they incentivize state and local safety activities. They also should be based on activity levels or outputs and not purely on funding.

STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLANNING

The Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) requirements of the Sec. 148 Highway Safety Improvement Program have been a positive force for addressing safety in the states. The State Highway Safety Alliance supports those requirements and recommends that they be **strengthened**. States should continue to convene broad committees to oversee the state highway safety planning effort. At a minimum, these committees should consist of representatives of state **and local** agencies responsible for engineering, education, enforcement, emergency medical systems, licensing, and commercial vehicle safety. The SHSP should address highway safety issues on **all public roads**, target funding to areas of highest need as identified by state and local data, and set statewide safety **performance targets**. Any separate federally-funded safety implementation plans (e.g., the Highway Safety Plan, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan, the State Transportation Plan) should **support** the SHSP performance targets, and states should **update** their SHSPs at least once during the reauthorization period.

SUPPORT ENHANCED DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The collection of performance data is central to the effective functioning of federal performance-based programs. In order to track and analyze performance, states need to be able to collect more complete, reliable and accurate data, have automated and linked data systems, exploit emerging data collection technologies and utilize better data analysis tools. Data improvements are complex and expensive. Federal funds for these improvements have been inadequate. This is a **priority** for states and the State Highway Safety Alliance urges Congress to fund state data improvements at **significantly higher levels** than current ones.

INCREASE INVESTMENT IN SAFETY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

State highway safety programs are stronger and more effective if they are built around **evidence-based strategies**. Research to produce the evidence of countermeasure effectiveness has been difficult

because federal funding for highway safety research is so limited. More countermeasure research is urgently needed. Research is also needed to evaluate emerging safety technologies, demonstrate and evaluate new strategies for reducing highway deaths and injuries, develop model laws and model programs and identify and document best practices. Additional driver and vehicle-related research is needed to enhance the safety of drivers and vehicles and to strengthen federal regulations. The State Highway Safety Alliance strongly supports **increased funding** for federal highway safety research.

PREPARE THE SAFETY WORKFORCE FOR THE FUTURE

The highway safety workforce at the state level is aging, and institutional knowledge about highway safety issues and programs will be diminished when the current workforce retires. There have been few efforts to attract young professionals into the field or enhance the professional capabilities of the current workforce. Members of the State Highway Safety Alliance are extremely concerned about

this trend and urge Congress to allow states to obligate their highway safety grant funds (those administered by FHWA, NHTSA and FMCSA) for workforce development, training and education with a **100% federal share**. Congress should **more adequately fund** federal highway safety training for states, and a Center for Highway Safety Excellence should be established to facilitate the development of **innovative safety workforce training** (such as peer-to-peer training programs) and support **better integration** of highway safety training of the three federal safety agencies.

CHOOSE INCENTIVES OVER SANCTIONS

The Alliance submits that **incentives are preferable** to sanctions and transfer penalties. Incentives give states the flexibility and resources to find creative, results-oriented solutions that meet safety goals and fit state and local needs. States are currently sanctioned for at least seven different safety-related purposes. An over-reliance on sanctions moves federal highway safety programs away from a cooperative federal-state partnership and generates increased state resistance toward the very safety issues that Congress wishes states to address.



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