

**Oral Statement of Anne S. Ferro  
FMCSA Administrator  
Committee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine  
Infrastructure, Safety and Security  
U.S. Senate**

**Making Our Roads Safer: Reauthorization of the Motor Carrier Safety  
Program**

**July 21, 2011**

Chairman Lautenberg, Ranking Member Wicker and Subcommittee members; thank you for inviting me to speak today. Eleven years ago, when Congress established the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, it recognized that our nation needed a consistent and strong set of standards and practices to bring commercial vehicle operations to the safest level possible.

By design, FMCSA is not about Washington – it's about the front lines in our states and hometown communities where the overwhelming majority of our employees are boots-to-the-ground in partnership with state and local law enforcement.

We take our safety-first mission with complete commitment, passion and enthusiasm because we know that lives are on the line. Death and injury at the hands of unsafe motor carriers and drivers come at a high price: over \$60 billion each year in costs that include health, medical, EMS, lost wages, lost productivity, pain and suffering.

FMCSA does its best to leverage just under 1100 employees, to oversee an industry of more than 500,000 trucking companies, 12,000 bus companies, and more than five million commercial motor vehicle drivers. Given this challenge, as we look forward, we must continue to focus on working with states and local communities to achieve the highest level of safety on our roads.

We also need the enforcement tools that allow us to do our job as effectively as possible. Today, I respectfully urge you to consider key technical assistance for the next surface reauthorization bill that will focus on the biggest challenges facing commercial motor vehicle safety. This technical assistance is thoroughly summarized in my written testimony submitted for the record.

It consists of recommendations built out of extensive discussions with our investigators, program managers, lawyers, and stakeholders nationwide over the course of several years, and analysis of enforcement cases against high risk operators that continue to put the public at risk.

The underlying purpose is to improve the tools we use to prevent and deter unsafe operators, drivers and vehicles, and to better screen and remove from the road the least safe drivers and carriers.

It's also about closing statutory gaps through which unsafe carriers and drivers move out of our reach. And it's about making sure our state

grantees have access to grants programs that are more efficient and effective.

Our purpose in recommending these changes to FMCSA's authorizing laws is not to impede the safe companies and drivers we regulate. At least 90% of the 500,000 companies we regulate make safety part of their operating values and practices.

But we also know that the remaining 10% are the higher risk carriers. The bad actors with multiple violations above the norm, are indeed out there. While it seems they represent such a small percentage of the companies we regulate, they are involved in over 40% of the serious and fatal crashes involving commercial motor vehicles. The changes we support are designed to protect the safe companies and the traveling public from these unsafe few.

If the Agency's enforcement laws were strong enough to deter the worst offenders, or if the Agency were empowered to shut down the ones that flout our actions, imagine how many lives could be saved????

When crafting these initiatives, we paid close attention to our own strategic framework...a framework shaped by three core principles:

- Raise the bar to enter the industry and operate on our roads;
- Hold motor carriers and drivers to the highest safety standards to continue operations; and

- Remove the highest risk drivers, vehicles and carriers from our roads and prevent them from operating.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, FMCSA is a relatively small agency, very much on the front lines, working side-by-side with your states as our partners to improve truck and bus safety. Together, we need the tools to get the critical job of commercial vehicle safety done.

Thank you for championing roadway safety. I speak for FMCSA's employees nationwide when I say we look forward to working with the Subcommittee in carrying out our safety-first mission. With the technical assistance summarized in my written testimony, we can significantly reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities involving commercial motor vehicles.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.