

**STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATOR
RAYMOND MARTINEZ
FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
FAST ACT IMPLEMENTATION:
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TESTIMONY**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Norton, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify about the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's work to improve commercial truck and bus safety and implement the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). It is an honor to testify today before the subcommittee.

The primary mission of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities involving large trucks and buses.

FMCSA was established as a separate administration within the U.S. Department of Transportation on January 1, 2000, pursuant to the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999. For more than 18 years, the 1,100 men and women of FMCSA have worked hard to ensure that freight and people move safely by providing oversight of motor carriers, commercial motor vehicles, and commercial drivers in the United States.

We regulate more than half a million interstate motor carriers, including truck and motorcoach companies, household goods carriers, and hazardous materials carriers and nearly 4.7 million active holders of commercial drivers' licenses.

Through our Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program, grant funding supports 13,000 State law enforcement partners who conduct 3.5 million commercial motor vehicle inspections each year. We thank Congress for the FAST Act changes that streamlined our grant programs and increased funding level. These changes provide the critical resources necessary for our State enforcement partners and other grantees to carry out important safety work.

We have seen success from our work, but more remains to be done. During 2016, 37,461 people were killed in crashes on the nation's roadways, an increase of about 2,000 over 2015.

Fatalities increased from 2015 to 2016 in all segments of the population—including occupants of large trucks. 4,317 fatalities occurred in crashes involving large trucks, 5.4 percent more fatalities than in 2015, the highest since 2007. Of those fatalities, 722 were occupants of large trucks. So our work, Mr. Chairman, continues.

Since beginning my tenure with FMCSA on February 28, 2018, we have engaged with our industry and safety partners, working consistently to maintain the safest transportation system possible—a system of excellence that includes holding motor carriers accountable, promoting knowledgeable drivers, ensuring that vehicles are well maintained to avoid breakdowns and the attendant roadside hazards, and encouraging innovation to unleash sound technology to advance highway safety.

FMCSA is proceeding on several fronts to accomplish those goals. Among them: our work to help the industry adapt and transition to Electronic Logging Devices (ELDs) to address hours of service compliance and driver fatigue.

The Congressionally-mandated ELD rule requires most drivers previously using paper logs to use ELDs to record information about their hours-of-service, making it easier for drivers to document their hours, and for employers and enforcement officials to review them.

The final rule's first compliance date was December 18, 2017, and full enforcement of the ELD rule began on April 1, 2018. Mr. Chairman, we are seeing results. Of the nearly 300,000 driver inspections that have been conducted April 1, less than one percent of drivers inspected have been cited for failing to have an ELD, when required.

FMCSA also is working to address the unique needs of agricultural industries. For example, the Agency has issued two 90-day temporary waivers from the ELD rule for agriculture-related transportation, and are implementing Congress' direction in our Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations.

FMCSA has invested a considerable amount of time as an Agency to ensure that industry, law enforcement partners, and our stakeholders understand the requirements surrounding the use of this life-saving technology. Since 2017, we conducted more than 550 outreach events regarding ELD requirements around the country, with more outreach efforts planned in the future.

Mr. Chairman, I also would like to mention the efforts FMCSA is making to reach military members and veterans as they transition to civilian life. We have several efforts under way to ease the transition into commercial driving careers, and we thank Congress for its partnership with FMCSA to reduce those administrative barriers.

These efforts include options such as allowing States to waive the skills test for military personnel with experience operating heavy vehicles in the military, allowing certain military personnel to simply "exchange" their military vehicle license for a CDL.

So far, more than 23,000 current and former military have taken advantage of this waiver process.

In addition, FMCSA is working to finalize a rulemaking which would establish a training program for qualified providers at VA to become certified in conducting commercial driver's medical examinations. Veterans, in turn, would have access to a more comprehensive system of health care service as more VA providers become qualified medical examiners.

FMCSA is working to implement an "Under 21" driver pilot program that would allow certain 18-, 19-, or 20-year-old drivers with training and experience in certain military occupations to operate commercial motor vehicles in interstate commerce.

FMCSA believes these rulemakings will go a long way to raising the bar for safety on our roadways by producing better trained and qualified CMV drivers. Taken together, these efforts represent a "win" for military personnel, to more directly use the skills they learned in the military; for industry, to address perennial driver shortages; and for public safety, to allow military drivers to use their heavy vehicle training gained by military service to prepare them to safely operate civilian vehicles.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, FMCSA is moving forward to encourage innovation—one of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao's top priorities—with our work on automated driving systems.

By leveraging innovative technology to improve CMV safety, we see the potential to save thousands of lives while both improving productivity and limiting the costs associated with crashes.

FMCSA is proceeding in the following ways. The Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee (MCSAC) met on June 12th and 13th, 2017, to discuss highly automated commercial motor vehicles. They met in October 2017, and will issue recommendations later this year.

We are also working with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration to develop a comprehensive plan to better manage department initiatives related to automated vehicles, in addition to a research plan.

FMCSA recently released a Request for Comments about FMCSA safety regulations which inadvertently may be a barrier to the safe testing and deployment of these technologies on public roads. We especially encouraged industry leaders and other interested parties to provide comments to the RFC, particularly given the dramatic pace of technology and clear interest in the market.

The comment period ended on May 10 and the Agency is reviewing the information received to incorporate into future plans. We plan to continue engaging the commercial motor vehicle community through public listening sessions, outreach activities, and through meetings with industry, safety advocates, driver organizations, and the motoring public.

Mr. Chairman, the public expects a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation system. With your support, FMCSA employees, partners, and stakeholders will continue to share this solemn commitment to maintaining safety for all road users.

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

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