



MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

C/O: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Room W64-232
Washington, DC 20590

May 20, 2009

The Honorable Rose A. McMurray
Acting Deputy Administrator
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Acting Deputy Administrator McMurray:

The Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee (MCSAC) accepted Task 09-01, “Developing a National Agenda for Motor Carrier Safety,” at its December 2008 meeting. Workgroup 09-01 was created to conduct work and was co-chaired by Clyde Hart, Michael Irwin, J. Todd Spencer, and Judith Stone. The workgroup was tasked with identifying top safety challenges that FMCSA should focus on to make significant advances in motor carrier safety and potential strategies to respond to those challenges.

At the March 2009 meeting, the Committee approved a report identifying four broad categories of safety challenges. That report was submitted to the Acting Deputy Administrator. At the May 2009 meeting, the Committee identified two additional issues to bring to the attention of the next Administrator:

1. New Entrant Process

While we recognize that, over time, safety initiatives have resulted in reduced fatality rates, we believe that there could be even more safety gains if there were improved ways to prohibit unsafe applicants from receiving operating authority. Currently, a new entrant receives operating authority before FMCSA conducts any kind of safety assessment (whether a roadside inspection, safety audit, or compliance review). The Committee believes that the process for granting new entrant operating authority should emphasize and focus on safety on the front end. Oversight, enforcement, and coordination, at both the front end and ongoing, need to be enhanced. We understand that FMCSA will offer us a new task to explore how to improve this process, and we look forward to providing recommendations at that time.

2. Motor Carrier Security

The MCSAC recognizes the strong relationship between motor carrier safety and security. The current division between safety and security responsibilities within the federal government propagates inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Additionally, the security of other transportation modes is often given greater priority. Therefore, the MCSAC recommends that DOT and DHS better collaborate, communicate, and coordinate on issues of motor carrier safety and security. We submit for consideration the establishment of an inter-departmental working group to facilitate such an initiative.

The MCSAC encourages the next Administrator to consider action on the above two issues raised in this letter.

Sincerely,

//signed//

David R. Parker
Chair
Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee