

**Remarks of Bill Bronrott
FMCSA Deputy Administrator
Smooth Operator Kickoff Media Event
Baltimore, Maryland
Wednesday, July 17, 2013**

Good morning everyone. On behalf of fellow Marylander and the President's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administrator, Anne Ferro, thank you for the invitation to join you to kick off the next wave of Smooth Operator.

At the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Motor Carrier Safety Administration, safety is our #1 priority.

We know aggressive driving is no accident. It's a personal decision. It's a shared responsibility among all who use our roads. And, it's preventable.

It is appropriate that we're launching Smooth Operator by the Ravens' stadium because saving lives on our roadways is the Super Bowl of public service. There is no higher calling. And, as evidenced by the wide array of organizations represented here today, it's a team sport.

I especially want to thank our front line offense and defense – our law enforcement officers – for putting their lives on the line to combat aggressive driving during this peak road travel season.

The fact is, aggressive driving is one of the deadliest threats we face. And, we see it every day: Speeding, tailgating, running red lights and stop signs, improper passing, and weaving.

We've all seen them – Motorists seemingly more concerned about reaching their destination quickly rather than safely – putting those who share the road with them at risk.

In 2011 alone, aggressive driving was a contributing factor in more than 38 hundred truck and bus crashes across our country. This is unacceptable. And it's preventable.

That is why programs like *Smooth Operator* set an example for any state that is determined to restore greater safety and civility on our roadways.

Each year, FMCSA provides nearly \$3 million in basic Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program grants to Maryland to reduce crashes, deaths and injuries involving commercial vehicles.

Maryland State Police Captain Bill Dofflemyer has been relentless in his commitment to commercial vehicle safety. And Sgt. Rob Mondor has been extraordinary in his work with teens – showing them how to stay out of a truck's blind spots or "No Zones."

Decades of experience with combating drunk driving and increasing seat belt use have taught us that, when it comes to changing driver behavior and saving lives, it takes leadership from all levels of government coupled with public education, high visibility enforcement, support from our court system, and the involvement of stakeholders from industry to safety groups.

Smooth Operator fits right into this framework. And, for good reason. This is serious stuff. Just ask our friends up the street at *Shock Trauma*. They've seen it all. And they will be among the first to tell you to play it safe around large trucks and buses.

Our strong advice is: Give trucks and buses their space to operate safely. Don't tailgate or cut in front of them. Stay out of their blind spots.

Large trucks and buses can't stop as quickly as your car. I am glad we are having a demonstration on this because, at US DOT, our research has found that:

- A standard car traveling 60 mph has a stopping distance of half the length of a football field. (160 feet)
- An 80 thousand pound tractor-trailer traveling 60 mph, requires 225 feet to stop. That's 75 yards.
- And, a motorcoach bus traveling 60 mph has a stopping distance of 200 feet or 66 yards.

Staying alive on the road has everything to do with the choices we make when we get behind the wheel. It is a shared responsibility amongst all of us.

When I was a kid growing up here in Maryland, I remember that the first thing you'd see when entering the state was a big roadway sign. And it said: "*Welcome to Maryland -- Please Drive Gently.*" I believe this is a message that we ALL can live with today.

On behalf of FMCSA's 11 hundred strong across the country, thank you Maryland for your leadership in combating aggressive driving.

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