

**Prepared Remarks for Scott Darling
FMCSA Acting Administrator
CDL Coordinators (Joint Session)
Charlotte, NC
February 11, 2015
2:45 p.m. (*but flexible*)
(*DA Session – separate meeting time/room*)**

Joint Session Audience includes:

- 200 SDLA personnel including CDL Directors and IT Managers
- AAMVA Staff
- FMCSA Division Program Managers from each State
- FMCSA Headquarters MC-E / MC-F Staff
- FMCSA Division Administrators from each State

Introduction

- Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for the warm welcome and the opportunity to speak with you today.
- It is a great pleasure to be here in front of such an all-star lineup of CDL Coordinators and IT Directors from every State Driver Licensing Agency as well my own FMCSA State Program managers and Division Administrators.
- I'd like also to recognize the leadership of two of my Associate Administrators on CDL issues – Bill Quade, who leads our Enforcement and Program Delivery Division, and Annie Collins, who leads our Field Operations Division.
- I am especially pleased once again to share the stage with AAMVA's President and CEO, Anne Ferro. It's great to see you Anne.

- It goes without saying that your stewardship of AAMVA will guarantee the vital partnership between FMCSA and the State Driver Licensing Agencies will continue to be strengthened – and most importantly – even more lives will be saved.

Role of State Partnerships

- This entire event is organized around a very important word – “partnerships.” If we are to be successful in our joint safety mission, we must work together.
- Yesterday morning you heard from Bill Quade; I would like emphasize a few of the points Bill made.
- We at FMCSA are grateful to have such strong State-Federal partnerships and I am a major proponent of continuing to strengthen and improve our relationship.
- To maximize our partnership, I challenge all of us to seek to truly understand each other’s capabilities and responsibilities. I call for our collaboration to be so close that we know what each other will say before they say it. Let us not think twice about pooling our ideas, sharing credit, and coordinating our actions to improve processes, yes, but more fundamentally, to improve commercial vehicle safety.

- This will require several things:
 - A shared vision of how to improve commercial vehicle safety and save lives;
 - Open lines of communication and mutual trust; and
 - A sustained effort to meet the requirements of Federal legislation and State needs in a timely fashion.

- FMCSA has taken steps to strengthen our partnership:
 - To foster effective communication and trust, we are listening to you through our four regional listening sessions.
 - Our CDL program team are here this week in Charlotte with one charge from me and that is to listen and absorb what you have to say.
 - I have committed our team to a sustained effort afterwards to take immediate steps where we can, and explore avenues for improvement with longer term opportunities.

- I can assure you for our part, we will remain focused on the road ahead to achieve our shared goals.

Full Compliance in 2015

- I came to FMCSA from a municipal entity. So I am very aware of what it is like to implement new federal rules and work within tight budgetary constraints. Each State is impacted by Congressional legislation, such as Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, or MAP-21 for short. Likewise, FMCSA

rulemakings, such as merging the medical certification to the commercial driver's license record, has had an impact too.

- Since this same meeting last year, each of you has been making a major push towards the September 30 compliance date for the CDL regulations.
- I know we are asking a lot and that is why FMCSA continues to offer our assistance, best practices, lessons learned, and financial support to each of you.
- We are in this with you. I have made it clear to my team that they must do everything possible to assist you.
- The only thing we ask of you is not to wait until the end of September to call us. We are ready to help right now.
- On the CDL side of our house, we have:
 - made grant money available;
 - launched twice monthly training programs and roundtables,
 - and held listening sessions.
- With Annie Collins and Bill Quade at the forefront, along with our Division Administrators and Field staff, FMCSA continues to stand ready to engage with you so that we can all cross the finish line together.

- You may have gathered from my accent that I am from Boston. I've taken the "Boston Strong" approach to my job as Acting Administrator at FMCSA.
- This is the way we do it there. We band together and stand strong as one.
- The payoff is great because lives will be saved.

Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you all.

At DOT, we work hard every day to ensure we are united, and act as one. The same goes for FMCSA. We regard each other as a family. I want the same relationship with our State partners.

As always, please think and practice "Safety First" here in North Carolina and in your home States.

Thank you all.

###