National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, DC 20594

Safety Recommendation

Date: August 4, 2014

In reply refer to: H-14-18 and -19, and H-14-23

Mr. Bud Wright
Executive Director
American Association of State Highway
and Transportation Officials
444 North Capitol St., NW
Suite 249
Washington, DC 20001

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation—railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline. The NTSB determines the probable cause of the accidents and issues safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. In addition, the NTSB carries out special studies concerning transportation safety and coordinates the resources of the federal government and other organizations to provide assistance to victims and their family members affected by major transportation disasters. We are providing the following information to urge the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials to take action on the safety recommendations being issued in this letter.

On July 15, 2014, the NTSB adopted its report concerning the May 23, 2013, accident in which a span of the Interstate 5 bridge over the Skagit River near Mount Vernon in Washington State collapsed after being struck by an oversize combination vehicle.[1] Additional information about this accident and the resulting recommendations may be found in the report of the investigation, which can be accessed at our website, http://www.ntsb.gov, under report number HAR-14/01.

[1] *Collapse of the Interstate 5 Skagit River Bridge, Following a Strike by an Oversize Combination Vehicle, Mount Vernon, Washington, May 23, 2013*, HAR-14/01 (Washington, DC: NTSB, 2014).

As a result of this investigation, the NTSB issued 18 new recommendations, including 4 to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); 1 to the FHWA, the Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association (SC&RA), and the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA); 1 to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; 4 to the Washington State Department of Transportation; 3 to the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators; 1 to the CVSA and the SC&RA; 1 to Nokia HERE, Google Inc., and Rand McNally; and the following 3 recommendations to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials:

H-14-18

> Develop a method for replicating all the dimensions of an oversize load for use in pilot/escort vehicle operations.

H-14-19

> Work with the Federal Highway Administration to amend the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways*, in accordance with *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets* and the *Load and Resistance Factor Design Bridge Design Specifications*, to include a requirement for low-clearance signage for highway structures that cross over a roadway. The requirement should provide a uniform minimum clearance height between the roadway and the bottom of the structure which, if not met, necessitates the installation of low-clearance signage.

H-14-23[2]

> Assist the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators in instituting a model training and certification process that includes reciprocity of certification in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico for drivers of pilot/escort vehicles, based on the *Pilot Car Escort Best Practices Guidelines*.

These safety recommendations are derived from the NTSB's investigation and are consistent with the evidence we found and the analysis we performed. Acting Chairman HART and Members SUMWALT, ROSEKIND, and WEENER concurred in these recommendations.

[2] Safety Recommendation H-14-23 is also being issued to the CVSA.

The NTSB is vitally interested in these recommendations because they are designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate receiving a response from you within 90 days detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement them. When replying, please refer to the safety recommendations by number. We encourage you to submit your response electronically to correspondence@ntsb.gov. If it exceeds 10 megabytes, including attachments, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions. Please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.

[Original Signed]

By: Christopher A. Hart,
Acting Chairman