

What's Next for Highway Safety?

**Panel Discussion:
Priorities in Motor Vehicle Safety**

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Challenges are clear

- 40,000 deaths in motor vehicle crashes in 2007
- Movement to more risky transport
 - Motorcycles
 - Smaller, lighter-weight vehicles
- Balancing safety with other public priorities
 - Pollution
 - Global warming
 - Movement of goods and services
 - Moving the economy (Stupid!)

Conflicts are apparent

- Higher gas prices and global warming concerns will accelerate interest in small cars, motorcycles
 - Obama is signaling that government may backtrack on commitment to revise CAFE to unlink it from safety
- Individuals want to go faster, and speed limits are rising
- Tired truckers have been given more hours on the road and the economy will make that difficult to change
- Auto companies are in dire straits and will howl about new safety requirements

Technology is confusing

- Promises of collision avoidance technology are still promises, not reality
- Need to study and understand driver response to new intelligent-vehicle technology
- High tech solutions require large investments that take needed money from other, lower tech solutions:
 - E.g., compare smart signal lights versus roundabouts

The answer for the new administration?

- Get back to basics
 - Identify the problem
 - Research a solution
 - Apply the solution
- Don't be bamboozled by high tech
 - Low tech is less expensive, short and long term
- Recognize that safety and other priorities are not inherently in conflict
 - Roundabouts and lower speed limits save lives and fuel
 - Roads with fewer crashes are more efficient for everyone