

TRANSPORTATION

TASK FORCE OUTLINES ACTIONS TO IMPROVE GRADE CROSSING SAFETY

(WASHINGTON) In an announcement to the National Association of Counties, Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena today released a report on how highway-rail grade crossing safety can be improved.

The report of the department's Grade Crossing Safety Task Force said that better cooperation, communication and education among federal, state and local governments and the private sector is needed to prevent future highway-rail accidents.

The report of the task force recommends 24 steps that the federal government, state and local governments, railroads and transit agencies can take to reduce fatalities at grade crossings. It charges DOT with the responsibility of guiding government and industry to work together, utilizing existing tools and expertise to find the appropriate combination of actions to make crossings safer.

The Secretary said that the task force's recommendations will help meet the goal, established in the June 1994 grade crossing action plan, of reducing crossing accidents and fatalities by 50 percent within 10 years.

The task force was headed by Associate Deputy Secretary Michael P. Huerta and consisted of representatives of four DOT administrations: the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

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