

PREPARED REMARKS OF FCC CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
APRIL 19, 2013  
2013 DISTRACTED DRIVING TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE

Good morning. Thank you all for participating in the FCC's Distracted Driving Technology Showcase.

A special welcome to Chairman Deborah Hersman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Mobile communications is transforming our economy and the way we live our daily lives.

Today, there are more active cell phones than there are adults in the U.S., and most of us cannot imagine life without our mobile phones. These mobile marvels create tremendous opportunities, but they also create new challenges, and texting while driving is one of them.

People who text while driving are 23 times more likely to have an accident than a non-distracted driver. And, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 3,331 people died in distracted driving related accidents in 2011.

Behind each of these numbers is a story. Last week, Sharon and Steven Hait of Boulder, Colorado stepped forward to tell the story of their son Alex.

Earlier this month, Alex swerved into oncoming traffic after sending a text while driving, and was fatally wounded when his car rolled over.

Alex's parents released a photo of the unsent text on his phone: "Sounds good my man. See you soon. I'll tw ..." and then it cut off.

These deaths are senseless and they have to stop. If Alex had just waited to send his message, he would still be alive.

There are three key parts of the solution to distracted driving.

The first is education.

We need to make sure that people understand just how dangerous texting while driving is, and we need to change social norms around distracted driving, the way we did with drunk driving. April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and events like this help to spread this message.

The FCC has also been working to support the education efforts of the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The FCC has established a dedicated distracted driving information clearinghouse to collect and share outreach information and new technologies that could reduce the problems of distracted driving.

I encourage you to check it out at [fcc.gov/distracted-driving](http://fcc.gov/distracted-driving).

We also work with industry and safety organizations to inform the public about the problems associated with distracted driving.

A second key part of the solutions is changing our laws.

In 2009 President Obama issued an executive order on banning federal workers from texting while driving government vehicles, and we've adopted this policy at the FCC. Over the past four years, the number of states banning texting and driving has more than doubled to roughly 40 states.

Third, we need to harness the power of technology to solve this problem.

I encourage all of you to visit the 20 plus exhibitor stations we have here today to learn how they are using technology to combat distracted driving.

These interactive exhibit stations include wireless carriers, government agencies, technology companies, safety organizations, and consumer organizations.

Again, distracted driving is not just a local issue, but it is a global issue.

Take a moment today to look at the Gallery of Posters we have compiled from around the world that so clearly illustrate the global nature of this challenge.

Remember, we all share a responsibility for curbing the dangers of driving distracted.

Let's get to work.

Now, I am honored to introduce the chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, Deborah Hersman.

She also holds a motorcycle endorsement and is a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician.

More than those distinctions, Deborah Hersman, who has been NTSB Chairman since 2009 — and a member of the Safety Board since 2004 — is an articulate and ardent advocate for safety across all modes of transportation.

Hallmarks of her leadership include a deep commitment to improving safety on our roadways.

Traffic accidents account for more than 94 percent of all transportation fatalities.

Since becoming Chairman in 2009, our speaker has taken on the tough issues around highway safety, notably distracted driving, which is why we are so pleased she could join us today.

The NTSB caused a bit of a stir when, in December 2011, it called for a nationwide ban on the non-emergency use of portable electronic devices while driving. It followed that call with a forum on “Attentive Driving: Countermeasures to Distraction” last March.

More recently, the NTSB put “Eliminate Distraction in Transportation” on its 2013 Most Wanted List of transportation safety improvements.

I would also note that Deborah is the first NTSB Chair to hold a commercial driver’s license, with passenger, school bus, and air brake endorsements.

It’s a privilege and pleasure to introduce NTSB Chairman Deborah Hersman.