

JAMES H. DOUGLAS
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

December 20, 2006

Mr. Ernie Blais
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
P.O. Box 568
Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear Mr. Blais:

Although the number of motor vehicle crashes resulting in fatal or incapacitating injuries has been declining in Vermont since 1990, the past five years have seen a spike in the number of major crashes. The first half of 2006 was trending toward a near record-breaking year for highway deaths and incapacitating injuries, but through our educational and law enforcement efforts we have bent the curve downward and have been able to save lives on all Vermont roads.

Fatal crashes involve speed and/or aggressive driving and often alcohol. They happen predominantly during afternoon drive time on weekdays, and they occur on state and secondary roads more than interstate highways. Crashes are happening everywhere – they are not localized. More than half of the people killed in a car crash were not wearing a seatbelt. Each year, more than 750 people are seriously injured or die on Vermont roads.

Highway safety is an issue we can do something about. To continue making progress towards a safer Vermont, we must build on existing programs, pursue new ones and have greater flexibility to respond quickly to those areas of highway safety in need of the most immediate attention. VTTrans is fully committed to this long-term initiative.


The Strategic Highway Safety Plan is an important step that will help improve the safety of our roadways. Highway safety is the responsibility of state agencies, local governments, private groups and all Vermonters. We must all work together towards the same goal.

There are numerous opinions, options and approaches to making Vermont's highways safer; there is no one roadmap to success. It is important, however, that we immediately begin the discussions necessary to find the right solutions for Vermont – solutions that will quickly bring about improvements that make our highways safer. The Strategic Highway Safety Plan initiative began and will continue to serve as an effective mechanism to further such discussions.

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I hereby transmit Vermont's Strategic Highway Safety Plan to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and, in accordance with FHWA guidance, ask for FHWA's determination that the SAFETEA-LU requirements for the plan have been fulfilled, and for FHWA's acceptance of the plan and process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James H. Douglas", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James H. Douglas
Governor

JHD/hkp