



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, DC 20594

Safety Recommendation

Date: August 4, 2014

In reply refer to: H-14-14 through -17

Ms. Lynn A. Peterson
Secretary of Transportation
Washington State Department of Transportation
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Olympia, WA 98504-7300

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 Washington State Department of Transportation 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 oversized 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.nts.gov>, under report number HAR-14/01.

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; 2 to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO); 3 to the American

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).

Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators; 1 to AASHTO and the CVSA; 1 to the CVSA and the SC&RA; 1 to Nokia HERE, Google Inc., and Rand McNally; and the following 4 recommendations to the Washington State Department of Transportation:

H-14-14

Revise your bridge list to provide lane-specific clearance data for all structures.

H-14-15

Revise your permit process for commercial vehicle services to include a state evaluation of the route's overhead clearances and lane widths with respect to submitted load dimensions.

H-14-16

Require both lead and trailing pilot/escort vehicles for any segment of a permitted route in which the permitted vehicle's dimensions are as wide as, or wider than, the travel lane.

H-14-17

Provide a geospatial application for route-specific bridge clearance data as a component of the effort you have begun to improve the permit process for oversize loads.

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.

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