



# PRELIMINARY REPORT

## HIGHWAY

### HWY21MH008

*The information in this report is preliminary and will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.*

On Wednesday, June 9, 2021, at 10:07 p.m. mountain standard time, a multivehicle crash occurred in the eastbound lanes of State Route Loop 202 (SR-202, Red Mountain Freeway), just east of mile marker 4 in Phoenix, Maricopa County, Arizona. In the area of the crash, SR-202 consists of 5 eastbound travel lanes with a posted speed limit of 65 mph.

The crash sequence began with an eastbound 2016 Freightliner Cascadia truck-tractor combined with a fully loaded 2015 Walker stainless equipment tank trailer (combination unit), driven by a 47-year-old male driver. The combination unit, operated by Arizona Milk Transport, Inc., was transporting milk from a local dairy to the United Dairymen of Arizona cooperative plant (under Transportation of Agricultural Commodities operations in the Phoenix area).<sup>1</sup> See figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Exemplar Arizona Milk Transport, Inc. truck-tractor and United Dairymen of Arizona tank trailer.

At mile marker 4, just beyond the off-ramp for the 52nd Street exit, the truck driver did not stop for slowed traffic that had formed a queue in the far-right lane, and the combination unit struck multiple vehicles. During the collision sequence, the truck crossed all four travel lanes to the left, struck the center median barrier, and then crossed back to the right before coming to rest in the far-left eastbound lane. When the combination unit struck the center median barrier, the tanker separated from the truck-tractor, overrode the barrier, then landed in the westbound shoulder and adjacent left travel lane (see figure 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Arizona Milk Transport, Inc. is an intrastate motor carrier performing agricultural commodities operations as defined under Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* 395.2. Title 49 *CFR* 395.2 defines agricultural commodity in part as (1) “non-processed food” and (2) “non-processed food” as “food commodities in a raw or natural state and not subjected to significant post-harvest changes to enhance shelf life, such as canning, jarring, freezing, or drying.”



**Figure 2.** West-facing view of eastbound SR-202 crash location and roadway evidence.

A postcrash fire ensued and the 2016 Freightliner tractor and a 2021 Chevrolet Equinox sport utility vehicle (SUV) were consumed by the fire. Four persons were fatally injured and 10 persons were transported to the hospital. A total of eight vehicles were involved in the collision. The struck vehicles included: the 2021 Chevrolet Equinox (the driver died); a 2016 Ford Fusion (the driver and one passenger died and two passengers were injured); a 2015 Nissan Altima (one passenger died; the driver and three passengers were injured); a 2013 Toyota Prius (the driver was injured); a 2013 Lexus CT200H (the driver was injured); a 2015 Dodge Charger (the driver and a passenger were injured); and a 2018 Mercedes C300W (the driver and a passenger were injured). The driver of the combination unit was not injured.

All aspects of the crash remain under investigation while the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) determines the probable cause, with the intent of issuing safety recommendations to prevent similar events. The NTSB is working alongside the Arizona Department of Public Safety (AZDPS) to compile a complete and accurate account of the crash. In addition to the AZDPS, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the United Dairymen of Arizona are parties to the investigation.