

## Restore and Enhance the National Automotive Sampling System

*Accurate and Timely Data are Crucial for Setting Priorities in Highway & Motor Vehicle Safety*

### The Request: Restore and Enhance NASS Capabilities to Achieve its Goals

Increasing NASS funding from \$12.5 million to \$20 million in 2010, with annual increases through the authorization period to expand and enable the program to collect high quality data to serve the 21<sup>st</sup> century safety needs of adults and children in motor vehicles:

1. **Restore Necessary Capacity**: Increase the number and geographic distribution of data collection sites to collect a sufficient number of high-quality, nationally representative crash cases.
2. **Enhance NASS capacity to monitor safety for children**: Implement the NASS Special Study on Child Occupant Protection (NASS COP), a program essential to the traffic safety community and already in pilot development at NHTSA through industry grants to The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (\$3 million per year).

### Why the US Needs Motor Vehicle Crash Data

- Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for all US citizens
  - Crashes are the #1 cause of death for children.
  - Motor vehicle fatalities have hovered around 42,000 for the past 10 years
  - Crashes cost society more than \$230.6 BILLION annually.
- The National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) is a nationwide crash data collection program operated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Used by government, industry, and academia in the US and around the world, crash data collected through NASS:
  - Set crash injury benchmarks and measure highway injury and crash trends
  - Determine effectiveness of occupant protection systems (like airbags and seat belts)
  - Identify emerging safety hazards

### Shortfalls in NASS due to Budget Cuts

- **Overall Capacity**: Over the last 20 years, budget cuts have severely reduced the number of crash cases collected. If current conditions continue, the number of cases will drop even further to 20% of needed volume, reducing NASS' ability to provide reliable data to support evidence-based policy and serve as an early alert system for emerging risks or successful safety advances.
- **Children**: The NASS System lacks adequate data on children in crashes.

### The Return on Investment: Reducing the Societal Costs of Crashes

By implementing the above proposal, the system could support research that will save lives and reduce expenditures – including healthcare and insurance costs – that result from preventable injuries.

**Already Saving Children!** As an example, a child-focused crash data collection system was created by The Center for Injury Research and Prevention at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia – the nation's leading authority on child passenger safety research. Since 1998, this system supported efforts by the automotive and occupant restraints industries, NHTSA, state legislators and public health officials that have resulted in more children today riding in age-appropriate restraints so that fewer are killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes:

- In the 1990's, an average of over 2,000 children under age 16 were killed every year.
- By 2007, fewer than 1,500 children under 16 were killed.
- Since 2000, over 2,600 lives have been saved (a 16% decrease).

A child-focused crash surveillance system must be publicly available to provide policymakers and researchers with an adequate data source to inform their work. The NHTSA, whose mission is to ensure the safety of Americans on the road, must restore, enhance and sustain a cutting-edge data source to ensure the safety of Americans well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Broad Support\* for Restoration of NASS and the Development of the NASS Special Study on Child Occupant Protection**

**Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety**

**Association of International Automobile Manufacturers**

**AAA (Automobile Association of America)**

**Automotive Occupants Restraints Council**

**Insurance Institute for Highway Safety**

**Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association**

**National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions**

**National Safety Council**

**Safe Kids USA**

**The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**

\*These organizations represent the interests of more than 98,000 automotive, restraints and juvenile products manufacturers, insurance companies, pediatric health systems, as well as community-based safety and traffic safety coalitions. This figure does not account for groups that belong to more than one of the above organizations.