



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Office of the Secretary
of Transportation**

Assistant Secretary
for Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

July 16, 2015

Ms. Susan Fleming
Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Fleming:

In carrying out its safety mandate, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) partners with stakeholders to reduce bus and truck-related crashes. To support this effort, FMCSA issued its 2011 hours-of-service (HOS) rule. While these new provisions were in place, there was (1) a decrease in the frequency of drivers using long work schedules, (2) a lower risk of driver fatigue, and (3) a reduction in the number of commercial vehicle crashes involving fatalities. This GAO report recognizes these achievements and also reported no increase in the number of large truck crashes during the morning rush hours between 5:00 am and 9:00 am.

FMCSA's January 2014 HOS study found that each of the three measures the researchers used independently supported the conclusion that drivers taking a one-night restart were more fatigued than those taking a two-night restart. This effect is consistent with the purpose of the restart provision, which is to ensure that truck drivers working long and demanding schedules have adequate nighttime rest periods for restorative sleep. In conducting this study, FMCSA adhered to standard principles and practices of scientific research, including the use of an independent peer review panel which evaluated and agreed with the project's methodology, analysis, and findings.

In an effort to continue our work, FMCSA:

- Pursues research avenues on the impacts of the HOS provisions and on effective counter-measures for driver fatigue.
- Commissioned the National Academy of Sciences to convene a panel of experts to recommend appropriate methodologies and statistical approaches for studying commercial motor vehicle driver fatigue and health.
- Is a co-sponsor of the North American Fatigue Management Program (www.NAFMP.org), an on-line training tool to help carriers and drivers address and mitigate fatigue.

Upon preliminary review of this report, FMCSA agrees with the GAO recommendation. The Department will provide a detailed response to the recommendation within 60 days of the GAO report issuance.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide additional perspective on the GAO draft report. Please contact Patrick D. Nemons, Deputy Director of Audit Relations, at (202)366-4986 with any questions or if the GAO would like additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Waship". The signature is written in a cursive style.A small, handwritten mark in blue ink that resembles the letter "f".

Jeff Marootian
Assistant Secretary for Administration