

REMARKS  
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
AT  
THE NATIONAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
JANUARY 19, 1967

Our meeting today is both a fulfillment  
and a beginning.

It is one of the first phases of fulfillment of a landmark piece of legislation. Great credit is due my good friends, Senator Warren Magnuson, Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee and Congressman Harley Staggers, Chairman of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee. These able and dedicated legislators, together with outstanding colleagues like Senator Abraham Ribicoff successfully met one of the most challenging social and technical problems of our times, involving the public well-being. Their goal was to create a program which would preserve the crucial right of

the citizenry to Life in the form of safe transportation, while at the same time preserving reasonable Liberty within the American free enterprise system, which has helped to make our country great. And they did a masterful job.

Now that the "foundation" has been formed, you have been asked to help build the structure. You should be complimented on your selection because competition was keen for these 17 posts. You were chosen because you represent the viewpoints and the expertise for frank and useful dialogue and for -- hopefully -- effective teamwork.

↳ The Congress gave the Administration a clear mandate to reduce the tragic toll of death and injury on our highways. } Congress imposed a strict demand when it set a deadline of January 31 of this year for the issuance of the first motor vehicle safety standards. But it also recognized

the many economic factors involved. The law specifically directs the Secretary to consider whether each standard issued is reasonable, practicable and appropriate.

The automobile industry, as President Johnson stated on September 9, 1966, at the signing of the legislation, "has been one of our nation's most dynamic and inventive industries." The manufacturers of the vehicles and equipment, together with the distribution and sales forces, and resale and repair businesses, occupy a tremendously significant portion of our economy.

↳ All thinking citizens want this vast economic bulwark of our prosperity to continue to grow in strength and vitality.

↳ I am confident that our economy will be a major beneficiary of safety legislation and of

sound administration. The protection of our most precious resources -- human beings -- serves to add -- very measurably -- to society's wealth, just as it strengthens the great intangibles of human happiness.

∟ Congress has conferred constructive responsibility on the Executive Branch in a typically American way -- by requiring the manufacture of products that meet minimum standards of safety, while encouraging competition for excellence. ∟ The purchaser cannot be expected to analyze and test for reliability an automobile that contains some 15,000 parts, any more than he can decide the efficacy of complicated drugs.

∟ An automobile is a major purchase, amounting to almost one half of the annual income of most American families. And it is a necessity. The public has a right to demand -- and it has demanded -- to know the performance capabilities of such a purchase.

∟ The Congress recognized your dual responsibility in specifying the membership of this Council,

to consist of both industry and public representatives, but it gave priority to the need for public safety by very clearly stating that the majority of members must represent the public.

Your tasks will not be easy.

Ultimately, the burden will rest on the element that is most adjustable -- technology. We must rely, as we have since the founding of this Nation, on our genius to adapt technology to our human needs.

You have the opportunity, indeed the responsibility, to consider not merely specific needs of 1968 and 1969, but longer-term issues.

Free from day-to-day duties within the Agency, it is you who can provide invaluable perspective to it.

The crucial safety and well-being of vast numbers of people, the economic well-being --

both of American industry and that of our neighbors  
abroad -- can be aided by your wise judgment, by  
your clarity and candor and conscience.

Good luck in your endeavors. We are  
counting on your contributions.

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