



**Remarks of  
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**International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy Roundtable  
Building an International Hydrogen Economy:  
Policy Challenges and Partnership Development**

**September 10, 2003**

I am pleased to join my colleagues from the Departments of Energy and State in kicking off this discussion about furthering President Bush's Hydrogen Fuel Initiative and the role of the International Partnership for a Hydrogen Economy.

The President's charge to develop a marketable hydrogen vehicle will benefit transportation by greatly reducing the Nation's dependence on foreign oil, and greatly improving the quality of our environment.

Today, as I'm sure you know, the transportation sector accounts for two-thirds of the U.S. oil consumption and emits about one-fourth of the Nation's greenhouse gas emissions. Very clearly, the transitioning to hydrogen fuel cells will change those numbers dramatically.

Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta has committed the Department to working with our Federal, industry and academic partners in pursuing sustainable mobility and a clean, safe, and secure future transportation system. The International Partnership for a Hydrogen Economy provides the framework to bring the diverse partners together in addressing these challenges in a fresh and exciting way.

We all face critical challenges in jumpstarting the transition to a safe hydrogen economy:

- Reducing the high cost of hydrogen;
- Achieving a breakthrough in storage technology;
- Establishing the infrastructure for a delivery system;
- And, most importantly, getting the public to accept this new fuel.

Because the Department of Transportation is fulfilling particularly important roles in ensuring the safe and effective implementation of hydrogen technology both domestically and internationally, I want to elaborate a bit on the Department's roles.

We have regulatory responsibility for vehicle safety and the safe transportation of hazardous materials as well as responsibility for coordinating research on the deployment of new vehicle technologies.

As the U.S. lead agency in the development of international codes and standards for the safety of vehicles and hazardous materials transportation, DOT is working on steps leading to the establishment of international safety codes for hydrogen.

DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration -- the agency that sets safety standards for all new motor vehicles -- is working to ensure the safety of new hydrogen-based fuel systems.

Internationally, NHTSA is working with the Hydrogen Working Group under the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations.

DOT's Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) already has safety standards that address the safe transportation of hydrogen by pipeline or as vehicle cargo.

RSPA is participating in a number of transportation working groups developing internationally harmonized technical standards related to hazardous materials transportation, including hydrogen.

As we transition to a hydrogen economy, DOT's unique role in demonstrating and deploying new transportation technologies in transportation becomes more important.

Through our research and transportation infrastructure programs, DOT continues to be a major partner in the process of developing commercially available hydrogen-fueled heavy-duty vehicles -- particularly transit buses and ships.

DOT's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has already helped put hydrogen fuel cell buses on the road in demonstration projects around the country.

FTA's focus on transit buses may well lay the foundation to accelerate the commercial viability for heavy vehicle fuel cells and their supporting infrastructure.

Under the IPHE, FTA is leading an effort with the Electric Drive Transportation Association and the American Public Transportation Association to form an International Fuel Cell Bus Working Group.

This proposal to strengthen collaboration on fuel cell bus research and demonstration will be the topic of the first International Fuel Cell Bus Workshop on November 19-20 in Long Beach, California.

In closing, let me just underscore the importance of addressing at the very outset of this important endeavor the critical safety and infrastructure issues that will arise in the transition to a hydrogen economy. The efficiency of the entire enterprise will be seriously compromised if we find ourselves having to address these issues after the fact. DOT is determined to work cooperatively with our partners to ensure that all elements of the challenge – including pivotal vehicle and infrastructure safety issues -- are addressed together, in a comprehensive way.

Our partnerships with the vehicle industry, transportation providers, energy industry, universities, and associations and standards groups are critical in meeting all of the challenges that face us in developing a safe, accessible and affordable hydrogen economy.

I applaud you for joining us today to help us find ways to achieve the President's hydrogen and fuel cell program goals.

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