

**Remarks of William J. Canary**  
**ATA President and CEO**  
**U.S. Dept. of Transportation NAFTA Conference**  
**San Antonio, TX—May 31, 2002**

Thank you. It is wonderful to be here with Mr. Moreno from CANACAR and our distinguished FMCSA Administrator Joe Clapp.

I understand that you've already heard from Canada's David Bradley last Wednesday, and that you've been listening to various government representatives for the past few days. So, of course, I know that you are eager to hear yet another speech, right? Let me assure you that I will keep my comments brief because I know you are ready to get home.

This conference marks an important milestone for the North American trucking industry and for the economies of Mexico, Canada and the U.S. Our nations, our economies, and our futures have never been so closely tied together as they are today.

This milestone also completes another chapter in a growing story of cross-border cooperation—among the various governments and agencies as well as among the various trucking organizations in the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

We saw this cooperation in full force in the effort to create more seamless, efficient and secure borders that will facilitate trade and commerce throughout North America to the benefit of all our peoples and our three nations.

Clearly, I think most of you will agree that change at the border will not come overnight, but that the actual implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, will be an evolutionary process. Having served in the White House during the first Bush Administration, it's hard to believe that 10 years have already gone by since NAFTA was negotiated.

The commitment laid out in NAFTA, and strongly supported by the Bush Administration, will certainly have positive benefits for all of our countries.

In discussing NAFTA, President Bush has said, "Trade helps people who want to find work; open trade is vital for economic growth. It's essential that we send the message out that trade is good for the working men and women of America."

I would add that it is also good for the working men and women of Mexico and Canada as well.

Without question, NAFTA has already been a clear success. Since its ratification, trade between the U.S. and Mexico has increased nearly threefold—from \$81 billion to \$233 billion. U.S.-Canada trade has grown from \$211 billion to \$381 billion.

By and large, that growth has been delivered on the back of trucks. Trucks move more than 70 percent of the freight by value between the United States and Canada, and over 80 percent of U.S.-Mexico freight.

While we as an industry are proud of these statistics, we also understand that we still need to make cross-border trucking operations more efficient. Because of the various steps and clearance procedures imposed on trucking companies delivering cross-border loads, we knew that our nations might not reap the full benefits of this historic trade agreement until we create more seamless borders.

Implementing NAFTA's trucking provisions to speed the wheels of commerce and economic growth throughout North America is a major component of more efficient trade.

From day one, ATA has stood by our trucking brethren in Mexico and Canada... pressing our respective governments to improve the various

procedures imposed by them on cross-border trucking operations.

President Bush, as a former governor of this very state, is all too familiar with the congestion, lost economic opportunities and enforcement actions that are a regular part of life at the U.S.-Mexico border. We are proud of the president, and his administration, for the leadership and commitment they have provided to see that these challenges are addressed.

Secretary of Transportation Norm Mineta reiterated that pledge when he said, “The United States cannot, and the Bush Administration will not, unilaterally ignore the commitments we have made in an international trade agreement previously approved by the Congress, regardless of the political pressure to do so.”

That’s how we got here today.

The Bush Administration carried out a careful and thorough analysis and took responsible action to make good on America’s NAFTA pledge.

At the end of the day, I do believe that NAFTA will result in a much more workable approach for cross-border operations, and one that ensures the bar for

U.S. operating authority is equitable, straightforward and high: All trucks operating on U.S. roads must meet U.S. safety standards. Period. It is a fair approach, and it is the right approach—for our industry, for North American trade, for everyone with whom we share our roads.

It also reflects ATA's position, which is equally clear: When it comes to unsafe drivers and unsafe trucks, we don't care about national origin. We don't want any of them on the road giving a good industry a bad name and putting our drivers, our families and our loved ones in danger.

So, once NAFTA is fully implemented, is our work done? I don't think there's a person in this room who would answer 'yes.' Particularly in the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> environment, we must continue to focus on new ways to improve both the speed and security of legitimate trade across our borders.

As pivotal as they are, the NAFTA provisions are merely one essential piece of the puzzle. A lot of work still needs to be done with various agencies on clearance procedures.

We need more resources devoted to the appropriate agencies and endeavors, so we can clear cargo, people and vehicles more quickly.

We can work together to further improve cooperation among the various agencies and industry groups that deal with the flow of cross-border commerce.

We can be more ambitious in the development and deployment of new technologies, such as pre-clearance release systems and inspection methods that expedite cargo movements.

We can, and must support, the smart border plans that President Bush has entered with his Canadian and Mexican counterparts, to further ensure our borders are efficient and effective, as well as safe and secure.

When you look at the facts and take into account all the new capabilities at our disposal today, and we commit the appropriate resources, it is not true that you either have an efficient border or you have a secure border and safe roads. That is a false choice.

This proposal demonstrates that you can indeed have both a safe and secure transportation system, while enhancing trade. Without question, we wouldn't be here today if that were not true.

Actually, we at ATA believe that NAFTA's trucking provisions will enhance the security of cross-border

trucking operations by simplifying the movement of trailers across our borders and eliminating the over-handling of trailers and cargo.

Everyone in this room...the folks who work in this industry...those in government who work with this industry on a daily basis...understands that with the appropriate human and financial resources, we can advance safety, security and economic growth hand in hand in each of our countries.

Already our nations have seen considerable benefit from NAFTA. Now our industry—the North American trucking industry—will have the opportunity to help drive this success to new heights.

Looking around this room, I know we're going to do it the right way, too. Why? Because I know that a commitment to safety...a commitment to security...a commitment to driving economic success...these are not commitments unique to the United States.

I believe they are commitments that define those who work in the trucking industry, regardless of what country they conduct their business.

I think I speak for everyone in this room when I say that the vast majority of us who make our living on

the road, take our safety and security obligations seriously and take great pride in the pivotal role we play in our respective country's economies.

So, Administrator Clapp, we appreciate the opportunity that a more seamless border presents us to further bolster our industry, and our countries' economies, at this challenging time.

With over 11 million truck crossings at U.S. northern and southern land borders a year, we fully recognize that achieving a more seamless and secure border is no small undertaking. But it certainly is an important one to the future of our continent.

I thank you all again for your part in this historic endeavor, and for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you today. God bless you!

