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LaHood Applauds New Wisconsin Primary Seat Belt Law
Wisconsin now eligible for more than \$15.2 million in federal funds

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood applauded Wisconsin for enacting a new primary seat belt law that is expected to save lives, reduce serious injuries, and cut medical costs by over \$150 million. Seat belt use is the most effective protection against serious crash injuries, reducing the risk by 50 percent.

Primary seat belt laws enable police officers to stop a driver and write a citation if they see a violation, as they do for other traffic infractions.

"We are pleased that Wisconsin has raised its safety bar and joined other states and territories that have adopted primary seat belt laws to save lives on their highways," said Secretary LaHood. "Wearing your seat belt can be the ultimate factor between life and death. Remember to always buckle up on every trip, every time."

NHTSA estimates that, with the passage of its primary belt law, Wisconsin will increase its belt use by approximately 10 percentage points, cut annual fatalities by 4 percent, and reduce serious injuries.

Traffic Crashes cost the Nation about \$230 billion each year in medical expenses, lost productivity, property damage, and related costs. Wisconsin pays \$3.8 billion of these costs. That is \$700 for every resident of Wisconsin, each year.

The new law also makes Wisconsin eligible to receive \$15.2 million in federal incentive funds. Primary seat belt laws have a proven track record of increasing state seat belt use rates. In 2008, the average seat belt use rate in states with primary enforcement laws was 13 percentage points higher than in states with secondary enforcement laws.