



Hydrogen Executive Leadership Panel Charter

Authorization

The National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) had a cooperative agreement with the Research and Special Program Administration (RSPA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (No. DTRS56-020H-003) which implements the RSPA-NASFM Partnership for Excellence in Pipeline Safety. The Hydrogen Executive Leadership Panel (The Panel) is authorized as an element of this cooperative agreement. On February 20, 2005, RSPA was reorganized as the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and the Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA). RITA is now the lead administration for participation in the Panel.

Background

NASFM represents the most senior fire official in each of the fifty states responsible for adoption and enforcement of fire safety codes, incident reporting and investigation, public education, firefighter training, hazardous materials incident response, and in some cases the regulation of natural gas and other pipelines. NASFM works with industry, organized labor, the scientific and technical community, standards organizations, the insurance industry, law enforcement, and environmental protection and worker safety authorities and regularly brings these diverse communities together to improve public safety.

The RSPA-NASFM Partnership for Excellence in Pipeline Safety was formed to improve the level of public safety by reducing deaths, injuries, and damage to property and the environment resulting from incidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials and to involve emergency responders in advancing the cause of pipeline safety. As an annex to this partnership a separate endeavor for Hydrogen, the Hydrogen Executive Leadership panel was formed to address similar issues for hydrogen transport, distribution, and vehicles across all modes.

NASFM and RITA (the “Partners”) have recognized that the global economy is engaged in a major transition to hydrogen and other alternative fuel sources for automotive and other applications. The transportation and handling of these alternative fuels differs in many ways from gasoline, diesel and other traditional fuels. Only through a thoughtful and timely marriage of scientific and real-world considerations can this important transition proceed. The Panel will serve as an on-going forum to exchange information concerning the public safety aspects of the transition to hydrogen and other new energy alternatives in ways that facilitate the transition.

Scope of Activities

The Panel will develop and exchange information on all aspects of how the transition to hydrogen and other alternative fuels may impact public safety, and identify the most significant safety issues associated with the fuel sources themselves, the infrastructure necessary to create and deliver the fuel sources to market, the impact on the safety of other automotive elements, and the existing environment which may be affected by the transition.

The Panel will bring together emergency responders, government regulators, scientists, consumers, and experts from the automotive and energy industries to facilitate a safe and orderly transition to hydrogen and other alternative fuel sources. Furthermore, the Panel will focus on issues involved in training, educating, and mobilizing emergency responders to work with government, industry, and community groups to facilitate and ensure hydrogen transport, storage and distribution, and the safety of vehicles and environs.

The Panel will provide information to NASFM facilitating the selection of hydrogen safety pilot projects to be managed under the auspices of NASFM. The Panel's work will be consistent with the goals of the RSPA-NASFM cooperative agreement, but may include projects outside the scope of the cooperative agreement if authorized. The Panel may not speak on behalf of NASFM or RITA.

Panelists

The Panel shall consist of no less than nine but no more than fifteen individuals, appointed by the Partners, with the consent of a majority of the NASFM Directors. Panelists shall be selected on the basis of their individual knowledge, experience, and ability to contribute.

A Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, one each from NASFM and RITA, shall be appointed in the same manner as the Panelists. All viewpoints will be represented and honored within the Panel, but the Chairman is under no obligation to maintain a strict balance or appoint individuals on the sole basis of their organizational affiliation.

Terms of appointment shall be two years and may be renewed. Panel members may be reappointed using the same process used for appointment. Panel members also may be removed at the discretion of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for failure to adequately participate in program activities. Panelists may resign at any time.

Participation on the Panel is entirely voluntary and in no way part of any legal or regulatory, or official advisory process at any level of the government.

Meetings

The Panel shall conduct a minimum of one meeting per quarter at a time and place designated by the Chairperson after consultation with all Panel members. Notice of the meeting shall be provided to all participants at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

The Chairperson shall approve in advance the agenda of each Panel meeting. The Chairperson shall preside at all Panel meetings except that the Vice-Chairperson may preside in the event of his or her absence. The Chairperson shall conduct all meetings in accordance with customary meeting procedures.

The Panel Secretary shall, as directed by the Chairperson, monitor records, summarize activities, and prepare and process letters or documentation. In the absence of the Secretary, the Chairman appoints a Panelist to perform the duties of the Secretary.

All Panel meetings and documents shall be regarded as open to public inspection. However, all panelists shall maintain the confidentiality of proprietary commercial information when requested to do so.

Operational Committees

The Panel shall establish two operational committees as follows: (1) the Safe Energy Emergency Response Advisors (“SEERA”) which shall consist of no fewer than five nor more than fifteen experts representing state and local emergency responders, industry experts, planners and safety and training officials; and (2) the Safe Energy Science Advisors (“SESA”) which shall consist of no fewer than five nor more than fifteen engineers, scientists and other technical experts.

The members of these committees shall be appointed in the same manner as Panel members. These committees may meet at the discretion of their respective chairs, or when requested to do so by the Panel. The Panel shall direct the activities of these committees subject to the concurrence of the Partners. Additional committees may be established upon the recommendation of the Panel and the concurrence of the Partners

Accountabilities

The Panel shall:

- Develop an objective understanding of the hydrogen, fuel cell, and other technologies receiving the most serious attention, and the infrastructure which may be required to support these technologies.

- Establish and maintain the free flow of information among the Partners, and facilitate objective discussions of the safety implications of the transition.
- Identify the most significant public safety concerns for consideration by Governments and those engaged in the development of the new energy technologies including detailed descriptions of real world incident response scenarios related to the new energy technologies.
- Develop and maintain information that will facilitate the development of emergency responder safety guidelines, training materials, guidance to emergency services training facilities, safety performance test methods, and other emergency response resources associated with the transition to new energy technologies.
- Develop and maintain information that facilitates public education about the safety of hydrogen-based and other alternative fuels.
- Maintain timely and accurate monthly reports of progress, resources and expenditures enabling the value of this program to be assessed.

Resources and Support

The Partners are responsible for providing office space, supplies, and clerical and other administrative support to the Panel. Additional resources may come from public and private contracts, cooperative agreements, grants and other appropriate sources, and may include contributions of money, products or services. The accounting of all resources regardless of size or form shall be according to generally accepted methods and shall be fully transparent.