Dear Bridge Engineering Colleagues from Taiwan and the United States:

It is a great pleasure to meet and exchange experiences with the bridge engineering experts from Taiwan and the United States in the Second US-Taiwan Bridge Engineering Workshop. We are expecting presentations and discussions on complex challenges from natural hazards and infrastructure demands as well as the innovative countermeasures taken by bridge engineers in both countries. I am certain that every participant will significantly benefit from the interaction facilitated by the workshop.

The memory from the first US-Taiwan workshop in last year (2005) was still fresh to some of our U.S. colleagues who participated the workshop in Taipei. The U.S. delegates were greatly impressed by the tremendous achievement of Taiwanese highway engineers in combating natural hazards, revealed in both the presentations given in the workshop and the live demonstration from the technical tours. We also appreciated very much the warm welcome from the organizer, Taiwan Construction Research Institute (TCRI), and sponsoring agencies, including the Directorate General of Highways (THB), Taiwan Area National Freeway Bureau (TANFB), and National Expressway Engineering Bureau (TANEEB).

This year, the TCRI and the MCEER have done a remarkable job in organizing the workshop, coordinating the technical tours, and providing documentation. The members of steering committee had contributed significant time and effort in overseeing and advising the preparation work. The generous assistance provided by the Caltrans in coordinating local activities is also greatly appreciated.

I would like to welcome the Taiwan delegation led by Director General Chen for flying half of the world to bring us their fascinating and educational experience. We look forward to tackling some of the bridge issues shared by the two countries in coordinated effort. I would also like to acknowledge the participation of all U.S. delegates. Your help is critical in introducing U.S. bridge technology and establishing common interest among the group. We sincerely hope to have your continuous support and participation in future events in Taiwan or U.S.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has actively supported international cooperation and technical exchange in bridge engineering technology. Such effort does not only provide much needed technology to bridge engineers worldwide, but also help the colleagues in the U.S. to expand their knowledge basis and to compare problems/resolutions. The FHWA plans to continue expanding and reorganizing its international technology exchange network, in hope to expedite the development of a more comprehensive approach for bridge hazard prevention/mitigation. Coordinated research effort and data sharing can most certainly produce critical aids to bridge engineers in all participating countries, beyond the level that each country can accomplish alone.

The first two US-Taiwan Bridge Engineering Workshops were set out to identify significant bridge issues in the two countries and to lay out essential models for joint ventures. We would like to gradually direct the activity into a steady and sustainable format to warrant strong and durable relationship.

We have a two-full-day program packed with presentations and discussions covering issues in bridge design, construction, management, and hazard mitigation, accompanied by site visits to a number of significant highway facilities. I hope everyone enjoys the technical activities we prepared and the stay in San Francisco.

W. Phillip Yen, Ph.D., P.E.
Office of Infrastructure, R&D
Federal Highway Administration