Dear Bridge Engineering Colleagues from Taiwan and the United States:

It is exciting to see our bridge engineering colleagues from Taiwan and the United States in Princeton, New Jersey, for the Fourth US-Taiwan Bridge Engineering Workshop. We are expecting a diverse program in bridge hazard mitigation and management, as well as active discussions.

After the past three workshops in 2005, 2006, and 2007, a few significant bridge engineering research subjects that are of mutual interest from both Taiwanese and the United States highway authorities were identified. These subjects included multihazard mitigation, accelerated bridge construction in moderate and high seismic zones, self consolidating concrete, high/ultra-high performance concrete, and bridge preservation. At the fourth year of the joint workshop, it is necessary to review the achievement and plan for actions against foreseen challenges in the pertinent area.

Both Taiwan and the United States are facing the challenges of building, maintaining, and rehabilitating bridges to accomplish the increasing reliability expectations from the public. The improvements of planning, design, construction, and retrofitting technology need to be achieved with limited resources. The coordination on the efforts of engineers and researchers from the two countries can significantly speed up the accumulation of knowledge and increase the effectiveness of the research investment.

This year, the TCRI and the MCEER have again done an excellent 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. We also appreciate the local coordination and hospitality from the State of New Jersey, the State of New York, and Arora & Associates, P.C. The choice of conference center and technical tour arrangements have been most ideal for the comfort and professional interest of the participants.

I would like to welcome the Taiwan delegation led by Deputy Director General Chen to join us for the engineering discussions and research planning. We look forward to developing collaborative programs that utilize the combined force from both countries to rapidly advance bridge technology that benefits transportation systems of both countries. The participation of all U.S. delegates is also acknowledged. The participation of U.S. researchers and practitioners is crucial not only to the collaborative programs but also to the dissemination and deployment of the research products. We sincerely hope to have your continuous support and participation in future events.

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.

We have a two-full-day program consisting of presentations and discussions covering hazard mitigation, bridge construction technology, bridge management, and other pertinent issues in highway transportation. Technical site visits to a number of significant highway facilities in New York, New Jersey, and District of Columbia, are arranged after the meeting. I hope everyone enjoys the technical activities we prepared and the stay in the ETS Chauncey Conference Center of Princeton.

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