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CANADA-U.S. RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION OF COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENCES

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark and the Minister of Transport, the Honourable Benoît Bouchard today announced that Canada and the United States have reached a bilateral understanding on the reciprocal recognition of commercial drivers licences.

"The understanding typifies the ability of Canada and the United States to work together creatively for their mutual benefit. It means that Canadian commercial drivers can operate in the United States without having to procure any U.S. driver permits and the same applies to U.S. drivers operating in Canada," said Mr. Clark.

The understanding eliminates a potential obstacle to transborder transportation. It will enhance the commercial and trade ties so vital to the economies of both countries. "It will facilitate the transportation relationship between Canada and the U.S., so crucial to the implementation of the historic Free Trade Agreement", said Mr. Bouchard.

Since July 1, 1987, it has been illegal for drivers in the United States to hold more than one commercial drivers licence. These measures were introduced to enhance highway safety. In Canada, all provinces have had legislation in place for some time prohibiting drivers of commercial vehicles from

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holding more than one licence. For the principle "one driver-one licence" to be applied without dislocating transborder transportation links, however, a means had to be found to recognize the validity of licences issued in other jurisdictions.

Bilateral discussions were begun in the winter of 1987/88 to examine the comparability and compatibility of the Canadian and American licencing systems.

A key role was played by the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) and its members -- the ten provincial and two territorial governments, who undertook the task of gathering and comparing information on licencing standards and procedures. After nearly 12 months of discussion and review, Canadian and American officials were able to satisfy themselves as to the basic comparability of the Canadian and American approaches.

On December 29, 1988, letters were exchanged between the Canadian Embassy in Washington and the American Federal Highways Administration giving effect to this understanding.

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