

23 June 2010

Maintain road safety spending to save money, says IAM

The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) is urging the government to maintain spending on road safety following its first Budget. IAM research, released today, proves the value of setting casualty-reduction targets and funding them consistently. Since targets were first introduced in 1990, an estimated 31,000 lives have been saved, benefiting the UK economy by a massive £50bn.

Neil Greig, IAM Director of Policy and Research, said: "The impact of casualty reduction targets has been enormous. If we continue at our current rate of investment, annual road deaths in the UK could slip well below 2,000 by 2020 - a further saving of £4bn and 2,500 lives over the next decade. Punitive cuts in road safety budgets will jeopardize these huge financial and social gains.

"IAM research shows that continued investment in road safety over the next few years will produce substantial rates of return to the economy. Our message is simple: spending on road safety saves money. Fewer casualties mean reduced NHS bills, fewer people absent from work, less congestion and much lower costs associated with long-term injuries."

The DfT has already announced a 27 per cent cut in road safety revenue funding and a £17.2m cut in capital grants for road safety as well as other cuts in major projects.

Mr Greig added: "Every death on UK roads costs society £1.68m. We need investment in safer drivers, safer cars and safer roads if we are to maintain current trends and make Britain's roads the safest in the world."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- Savings calculated are based on the government's average cost of per fatality (£1.68m per individual fatality) and the government regions' annual spend on road safety (on average, £0.4bn in England, IAM Facts 2010, p151).
- In the USA where no central targets were introduced fatalities were steady between 42,000 and 44,000 per year for over twenty years. This contrasts with EU-15, where fatalities more than halved over the same period.

Media contacts:

IAM Press Office – 020 8996 9777

press.office@iam.org.uk

ISDN broadcast lines available

iam.org.uk

