

NTSB Chair Homendy



The Honorable Jennifer Homendy Chair



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Biography

Jennifer L. Homendy [pronounced HAH-mendy] was sworn in as the 15th Chair of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) on August 13, 2021, after being nominated by the President and unanimously confirmed by the Senate. The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation.

Chair Homendy is the agency's chief executive, managing an annual budget of about \$129.3 million and more than 411 full-time employees across the country, including the NTSB's regional offices located in Anchorage, Alaska; Seattle, Washington; and Denver, Colorado. She is the fourth woman to serve as Chair since the agency was created in 1967.

Chair Homendy has used her national platform to advocate for the implementation of NTSB safety recommendations, including strategies to reverse the deadly epidemic of traffic deaths, which have surged since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. Her work has been especially focused on protecting vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and people with disabilities.

As a vocal champion of the [Safe System Approach](#), Chair Homendy speaks often about the need for a holistic approach to managing safety, preventing crashes and injuries, and saving lives on our nation's roads — an approach that has proved successful in other transportation modes, including commercial passenger aviation.

Another of Chair Homendy's priorities is to ensure the NTSB's readiness to carry out its mission amid rapid technological advancement in all modes of transportation, including advanced driver assist systems, [automated vehicles](#), commercial space transportation, uncrewed aircraft systems, advanced air mobility, supersonic aircraft, high-speed ground transportation, and clean energy sources to fuel vehicles, such as high-voltage lithium-ion batteries and hydrogen. She is pushing for measures that not only will save lives but preserve the public's trust in proven [lifesaving technologies](#), such as automatic emergency braking and forward-collision warning.

Chair Homendy is a staunch advocate for [improving passenger and fishing vessel safety](#), having served as the Board Member on scene for the fire and subsequent sinking of the Conception dive boat off the coast of California in September 2019, which was the deadliest U.S. marine tragedy in recent history. She continues to push for the implementation of safety recommendations stemming from the Conception investigation, as well as NTSB investigations of the 2018 sinking of the amphibious passenger vessel Stretch Duck 7 in Branson, Missouri; the 2017 capsizing and sinking of fishing vessel Destination in Alaska; and the 2014 capsizing and sinking of fishing vessel Christopher's Joy in Louisiana.

In aviation, Chair Homendy is focused on addressing NTSB's long history of concerns with the [safety of revenue passenger-carrying aviation operations](#). These operations – which include [parachute jump flights](#) as well as sightseeing flights conducted in hot air balloons, helicopters, and other aircraft – are not subject to the same maintenance, airworthiness, and operational requirements as other commercial flight operations. Chair Homendy's passion for this issue is due in part to being the Board Member on scene for multiple tragedies involving these operations, including the crash of a parachute jump flight in Hawaii that killed 11; the [midair collision](#) of two sightseeing flights in Alaska that killed six and injured 10; and the [crash of a vintage B-17 sightseeing flight](#) that killed seven passengers and injured seven others.

Chair Homendy is also focused on ensuring that commercial aviation in the United States continues to be held to the highest standards of safety. While a Member of the Board, Chair Homendy reviewed and debated recommendations that would ensure that the National Air Space continues to be the safest in the world and that lessons are learned from every fatality, injury, or near miss that the NTSB has investigated.

The investigations that guide her efforts include the 2017 [near-collision](#) in San Francisco, which put more than 1,000 people at imminent risk of serious injury or death; the 2018 [engine failure](#) of Southwest 1380 that resulted in one passenger fatality; and the 2019 [crash](#) of Atlas Air in Trinity Bay, TX, that killed three crew members.

Chair Homendy has served as the agency's 44th Board Member since August 2018. She has debated and approved numerous investigation reports, provided expert testimony at the federal and state levels on a wide range of transportation safety issues, and launched with the NTSB "Go Team" on numerous investigations.

From 2004 to 2018, Chair Homendy served as the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I Committee) of the U.S. House of Representatives. In that role, Chair Homendy was the most senior strategic advisor on safety and economic issues involving the rail industry and its employees and passengers. In addition, she was responsible for strategic advice regarding the safety of transporting oil and gas by pipeline, and transporting hazardous materials in all modes, including aviation.

Throughout her tenure on the T&I Committee, Chair Homendy successfully advocated for the inclusion of NTSB safety recommendations in relevant legislation. She was instrumental to ensuring that the 2008 reauthorization of rail programs included a requirement that positive train control (PTC) technology be installed on most of the U.S. railroad network – a safety milestone she was able to celebrate from her vantage point as an NTSB Board Member when it was fully implemented.

PTC is designed to prevent train-to-train collisions, overspeed derailments, incursions into established work zones, and movements of trains through switches left in the wrong position. NTSB estimates that PTC could have prevented 154 rail accidents that killed more than 300 people and injured more than 6,800 passengers, crewmembers, and other rail workers since 1969. In her work at the NTSB, Chair Homendy remains dedicated to improving rail worker and passenger safety.

In 2010, Chair Homendy spearheaded the T&I Committee's extensive oversight investigations of the nation's pipeline and hazardous materials safety program and the largest and costliest inland oil spill in U.S. history that occurred in Marshall, Michigan. She helped shape numerous laws that led to improvements in pipeline leak detection, mitigation, and emergency response, including the installation of excess flow valves on distribution pipelines. Chair Homendy continues to push for improvements in pipeline safety in her current role.

Following several high-profile transportation incidents involving the use of drugs and the rise of opioids use in the transportation sector, Chair Homendy led the T&I Committee's 2018 multimodal, in-depth review of the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) drug- and alcohol-testing program. The resulting report identified significant gaps in the program and made recommendations to USDOT and Congress to improve transportation safety.

Earlier in her career, Chair Homendy held a position with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, where she represented the interests of working families before Congress and the Executive Branch, focusing on transportation (trucking, rail, and aviation) and international trade issues. She served as a classified staff liaison for the Teamsters on the President's Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiations, the U.S. Department of Labor's Advisory Committee on Trade, and the U.S. National Administrative Office's North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation.

In an earlier role at the Transportation Trades Department (TTD) of the AFL-CIO, Chair Homendy spearheaded transportation labor's efforts to reauthorize the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and the USDOT hazardous materials safety program. Before that, Chair Homendy was with the American Iron and Steel Institute, where she advocated for the American steel industry and its employees before Congress in the areas of domestic manufacturing, transportation, environment, and energy.

Chair Homendy is an enthusiastic student of all NTSB modal areas. In addition to earning Pro Board® certification as a Hazardous Materials Responder at the Core Operations Level (with Product Control and Personal Protective Equipment Mission Specific Competencies), Chair Homendy completed Private Pilot Ground School and is currently completing the requirements to obtain a private pilot license, and holds an M2 motorcycle endorsement. She is also an avid runner and cyclist, which fuels her advocacy work on behalf of vulnerable road users.

Speeches & Testimony

January
04
2024

Remarks:
[Media Briefing on the final Investigation Report: 2021 WMATA Train Derailment in Rosslyn, VA](#)

December
06
2023

Summit:
[Opening Remarks Before the Navigating Mental Health in Aviation Summit](#)

November
28
2023

Remarks:
[Rail Share Conference](#)

November
14
2023

Board Meeting:
[Opening Statement: Multivehicle Crash at Signalized Intersection](#)

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