

March 5, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of key stakeholders that represent a wide cross section of auto manufacturers, suppliers, repairers, technology and communications companies, mobility providers, state and city governments, safety and national security groups, seniors, and persons with disabilities, we write to express our strong support for the Senate to take up and pass the AV START Act (S. 1885) as soon as possible.

In a strong showing of bipartisan support, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee unanimously approved the AV START Act last October. We believe that this legislation warrants expedited consideration to ensure that S. 1885 can be reconciled with its House counterpart legislation (H.R. 3388, the SELF DRIVE Act), which passed the full-House of Representatives by voice vote on September 6, 2017.

Both the Senate and House bills strengthen existing safety oversight by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and complement the iterative work of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) with respect to their highly automated vehicle policy guidance. Many of the concepts originally included in the Department's highly automated vehicle guidance are also to be found in the AV START and SELF DRIVE Acts, including technology neutrality between automakers and technology companies. In addition, the pending Congressional legislation helps to provide a clear delineation of federal and state roles with respect to highly automated vehicles—a critical aspect that will protect against a patchwork of regulations that could stifle innovation, job growth, and the development of safety technologies which will reduce the number of lives lost on U.S. roadways.

While there are a number of compelling reasons to expedite Senate floor consideration of the AV START Act, the most important factor is the lives that could be saved. DOT data shows that driver error is a factor in approximately 94 percent of all crashes on U.S. roads—crashes which took the lives of over 37,000 men, women, and children in 2016.

Development and eventual deployment of advanced vehicle technologies have the potential to significantly reduce these crashes and at the same time expand mobility options for persons with disabilities, seniors, and those who require access to more affordable transportation. Further, the decrease in crashes will mean fewer roadway backups, decreasing both congestion and carbon emissions from existing vehicles.

The AV START Act represents an historic opportunity for Congress to establish a technology neutral regulatory framework to advance these groundbreaking technologies while supporting research and investment in the United States. Due to these benefits, we believe this legislation will garner overwhelming bipartisan support in the U.S. Senate. With your help, the Senate and House legislative proposals can be reconciled to enable a final bill to be presented to the President for his signature later this year. Conversely, the lack of Congressional action on this important legislation will only cause uncertainty and delays in the development and ultimate deployment of such life-saving technologies.

We urge you to work with Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson and Senator Gary Peters to see that the AV START Act is brought to the Senate floor for consideration before the Memorial Day recess.

Advantage Rent-A-Car, Inc.
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, Inc.
Alliance for Transportation Innovation
American Car Rental Association
American Council of the Blind
American Highway Users Alliance
American Network of Community Options and Resources
Americans for Tax Reform
Aptiv
Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International
Automotive Service Association
Bandago Van Rental
BMW Group of North America, LLC
Competitive Enterprise Institute
Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association
Consumer Technology Association
Crown Castle
Denso
Digital Liberty
Disability Rights Advocates for Technology
Enterprise Holdings, Inc.
Fast Track Mobility LLC
FCA US, LLC
Ford Motor Company
General Motors
Geotab, Inc.
Global Automakers
Harman
Honda North America, Inc.
Hyundai Motor America
Intel
Intelligent Transportation Society of America
Jaguar Land Rover North America, LLC

Kia Motors
Lyft
Mazda North American Operations
Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC
Mitsubishi Motors North America, Inc.
Mothers Against Drunk Driving
Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association
Narcolepsy Network
National Cued Speech Association
National Federation of the Blind
National Taxpayers Union
Nissan North America, Inc.
nuTonomy
NXP
Porsche Cars North America, Inc.
Robert Bosch LLC
Securing America's Future Energy
Segs4Vets
SiriusXM
State Van Rental
Subaru of America
R Street Institute
The Hertz Corporation
Third Way
Telecommunications Industry Association
Toyota Motor Company
U-Save Auto Rental
U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association
Via
Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.
Volvo Car Corporation
What 3 Words
60 Plus Association

cc: Senator John Thune, Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Senator Bill Nelson, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Senator Gary Peters