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February 4, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee:

The Consumer Technology Association (CTA) appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record for the Senate Commerce Committee hearing titled, “Hit the Road, Mac: The Future of Self-Driving Cars.”

CTA represents more than 1200 member companies, 80 percent of which are small businesses and startups. Our membership spans the autonomous vehicle (AV) ecosystem, including suppliers, manufacturers, software developers, and service providers. At CES® 2026, which hosted 148,000 attendees and 4100 exhibitors, policymakers and industry leaders saw firsthand how this technology improves safety, expands mobility, and strengthens American innovation and competitiveness.

AVs Can Save Lives and Expand Mobility

AVs are not a distant concept. They are operating today and delivering real world benefits. AVs can reduce crashes, expand mobility for seniors and people with disabilities, improve supply chain efficiency, and unlock new services across the economy. Most importantly, they address the leading cause of roadway fatalities: human error. Safer systems mean fewer crashes and fewer families facing preventable tragedy.

This progress is already visible. AVs have logged more than 145 million miles on U.S. roads. They are operating in cities such as Austin, Phoenix and Las Vegas, and they are hauling freight in states like Texas, Arkansas, and New Mexico. The technology works, and deployment is accelerating.

America Can Lead—But Only With Regulatory Clarity

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) recently described the emergence of a “Golden Age of Innovation,” driven by advances in manufacturing, science, and technology. America’s leadership in AVs will depend on whether we can innovate quickly, scale responsibly, and compete globally.¹

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/WHOSTP-2025-Wins.pdf>

Today, the United States risks falling behind because innovators still lack clear, consistent rules of the road. In the absence of a durable federal framework developers face a growing patchwork of state and local requirements. In 2025 alone, lawmakers introduced more than 1000 technology-related bills. Even when well-intentioned, inconsistent approaches increase compliance costs, delay deployment, and create uncertainty for consumers and innovators, especially small businesses and startups.

Congress Should Set a Clear National Framework

Congress should establish a clear national framework for all types of AVs that supports safe deployment and prevents a 50-state regulatory maze. That framework should:

- **Boost safety** by supporting uniform expectations for safety assurance and cybersecurity.
- **Provide clarity** for consumers and innovators by reducing confusion caused by state-by-state rules.
- **Strengthen U.S. competitiveness** by enabling American companies to lead in a technology shaping global transportation and logistics.
- **Expand accessibility and inclusion** by ensuring AVs improve mobility for seniors and people with disabilities, including individuals who rely on nonvisual navigation.

Congress should also ensure federal policy is built for next-generation vehicle design—not yesterday's assumptions. As AV technology evolves, policymakers should avoid mandating legacy features that add unnecessary cost, complexity, and weight without improving safety outcomes. For example, proposals to mandate AM radio in every new vehicle would hardwire a legacy requirement into tomorrow's vehicle platforms—adding cost and design constraints without improving safety. When compliance becomes more expensive than innovation, deployment slows, and American leadership slips.

Conclusion

AVs represent a generational opportunity to save lives, strengthen supply chains, and expand access to transportation for millions of Americans. The technology is ready – what we need now is clear, consistent national policy.

CTA looks forward to working with the Committee to help ensure America remains the global leader in mobility innovation and to help deliver a regulatory framework that prioritizes certainty, safety and American competitiveness.

Sincerely,



Gary Shapiro
CEO and Vice Chair
Consumer Technology Association