

August 27, 2018



The Honorable John Thune, Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United State Senate  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson, Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United State Senate  
425 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

On behalf of the American Highway Users Alliance (the Highway Users), I write to thank you and encourage you to re-double your efforts to secure Senate passage of the critically important *AV Start Act*, S. 1885. We appreciate your determination and that of the bill's co-sponsors (Senators Peters, Blunt, Stabenow, and Wicker), which secured broad bipartisan support in Committee last fall to report the bill favorably to the U.S. Senate.

The Highway Users' members represent millions of drivers and businesses in every corner of the country that fund our roads through fuel taxes and other user fees. Our highest priorities are improving the safety and mobility of Americans. Unfortunately, both safety and mobility have been on the decline as highway deaths have spiked and congestion has worsened. In 2016 (the latest year in which official DOT numbers are available) 37,461 people were killed on U.S. roads; more than 100 per day and a 14% increase in just two short years. Traffic congestion has grown rapidly since recovery from the recession with more drivers and very little new capacity. According to the Texas Transportation Institute, the cost is \$160 billion in urban areas alone.

Despite these sobering statistics, your legislation presents an enormous opportunity for America to re-establish its traditional position of leadership in both highway safety and personal mobility. We believe an overwhelming majority of Senators would vote for it if given the opportunity. Unfortunately, with each passing day that the bill is not considered, investment in emerging autonomous vehicle technology heads outside of our borders, where other countries are encouraging research and deployment. But with prompt passage of your bill, we still have the opportunity to lead, rather than follow others on these lifesaving innovations.

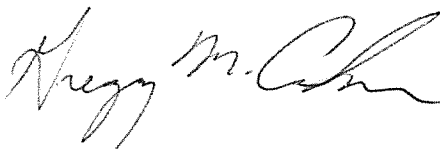
Make no mistake; autonomous vehicles are not a panacea that will eliminate all fatalities. Tragedies will still occur and the media will report on them. However, with human factors contributing to 94% of fatal

crashes, we should not wait to deploy proven technologies that will dramatically reduce these tragic deaths. Passage of your bill would accomplish this goal by creating a logical nationwide approach to regulation of these vehicles, increase deployments of autonomous vehicles, and create the framework for additional regulation in the future. Most importantly, nothing in your legislation would permit a manufacturer from deploying an autonomous vehicle on public roads that is not evaluated by NHTSA and determined to be as safe or safer than a non-exempt, traditionally-regulated vehicle.

In addition, highly automated and autonomous vehicles hold out the promise of increasing personal mobility and reducing congestion. Connected and autonomous vehicles will soon optimize route choices and speed in real time without the distraction of hand-held devices. For many Americans who cannot drive a traditional vehicle, an autonomous vehicle may provide more options and the freedom of auto-mobility that others enjoy.

Thank you again for your leadership. Please count the Highway Users among your strongest supporters for passage of the AV Start Act and do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of help in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory M. Cohen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gregory" being the most prominent.

Gregory M. Cohen, P.E.  
President & CEO

Cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader  
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Minority Leader  
The Honorable Gary Peters, bill co-sponsor  
The Honorable Roy Blunt, bill co-sponsor  
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, bill co-sponsor  
The Honorable Roger Wicker, bill co-sponsor