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Contacts: Scott Hall (Auto Alliance)
202-326-5561
shall@autoalliance.com

U.S. Senate Can Make History and Save Lives by Passing the AV START Act

Counterpart bipartisan bill promoting lifesaving technologies passed U.S. House one year ago

Washington, D.C.—Various automakers, suppliers, tech companies, and advocates for safer roads are urging the U.S. Senate to take action on an historic opportunity to advance greater road safety, innovation, expand mobility, and boost American competitiveness by passing the AV START Act (S. 1885).

One year ago today, a similar bill—the SELF DRIVE Act (H.R. 3388)—passed the House of Representatives with unanimous support. Like the House bill, the AV START Act establishes a framework for the safe testing, development, and deployment of automated vehicle technology while also supporting research and investment in the United States.

The AV START Act will also help strengthen existing safety oversight by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and would protect against an unworkable patchwork of state and federal laws and regulations that could stifle innovation, job growth, and the development of safety technologies.

While there are a number of compelling reasons to pass the AV START Act, the most important factor is the potential for lives to be saved. Government data shows that human choice or error is a factor in approximately 94 percent of all crashes on U.S. roads—crashes that took the lives of an estimated 40,000 men, women, and children in 2017.

The development and eventual deployment of automated vehicle technologies also has the potential to significantly reduce the number of 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 automobiles.

Americans understand these potential benefits. New research shows support for autonomous vehicles to improve the independence of seniors and individuals with disabilities. [In a survey fielded by Morning Consult](#), 57 percent of respondents say they are likely or very likely to support

AVs because of the potential they have to transform the lives of Americans who are elderly or disabled.

Here is just a sampling of what supporters of the AV START Act are saying:

“Outdated federal regulations and the potential for a patchwork of state laws could impede the very safety benefits that show great promise. The absence of a clear federal framework, which respects traditional state authorities, could create an environment that is hostile to such innovations and inadvertently hinder America’s leadership when it comes to autonomous technologies. Fortunately, [the Senate’s] legislation, the AV START Act, offers an opportunity to address these concerns and ensure necessary oversight and regulation of such technologies – while also providing an unprecedented increase in mobility for seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities.”

–Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers

“Most importantly, nothing in [the AV START Act] 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.”

–American Highway Users Alliance

“Cruise and GM share a common vision: a world with zero crashes, zero emissions, and zero congestion. We believe that self-driving technology is the most effective way to achieve that vision, and we’re very passionate about our work. Even though we know deploying self-driving cars at scale won’t be without challenges, we know it’s absolutely worth it.”

–Cruise Automation

“Without question, the potential benefits of autonomous vehicles, ranging from increased safety to greater mobility access, will transform transportation in the United States. That opportunity, however, will be missed if the Senate does not pass the AV START Act and reconcile it with its House counterpart, H.R. 3388, the SELF DRIVE Act.”

–Ford Motor Company

“The [AV START Act] will strengthen existing oversight by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Suppliers, vehicle manufacturers, software companies, and other automated vehicle stakeholders will be required to submit to NHTSA the following: safety assessment certifications on test results; cybersecurity plans to identify potential vulnerabilities and responses; and, privacy plans to detail how vehicle information is collected, stored, used, and disclosed to consumers.”

–Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association

“[The AV START Act] presents an incredible opportunity for the United States to strengthen its traditional position of leadership in both highway safety and personal mobility. With each passing day that the bill is not considered, investment in emerging autonomous vehicle technology risks heading outside of our borders, where other countries are encouraging research and deployment.”

–RStreet

“At Toyota, we see the potential for autonomous driving technology to help people – particularly those who cannot currently drive because of a disability or advanced age - enjoy new levels of independence and mobility. Our work on autonomous driving technology is part of our continued effort to improve lives by giving everyone in our society the freedom to move. By creating autonomy for cars, Toyota’s ultimate goal is to expand autonomy for people.”

–Toyota Research Institute

“Manufacturers and technology developers like Volkswagen Group are poised to continue to invest heavily in the United States but need to see more clearly defined roles around the regulation of automated vehicles. Without clear guardrails, uniformity and clarity around the rules of the road for automated vehicle testing and deployment in the United States these investments are likely to go elsewhere.”

–Volkswagen Group of America

Additionally, on Monday, July 23, 2018, the [Coalition for Future Mobility joined a diverse group of more than 100 stakeholders](#) including advocates for the disabled, veterans, environmental groups, and safety advocates in sending a letter to the U.S. Senate to advocate for action on the bipartisan AV START Act.

Find out more about the Coalition for Future Mobility’s campaign and the benefits of self-driving vehicles at: <https://coalitionforfuturemobility.com/>

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Attachments Include Full Letters from the following:

- [Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers](#)
- [American Highway Users Alliance](#)
- [Cruise Automation](#)
- [Ford Motor Company](#)
- [Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association](#)
- [RStreet](#)
- [Toyota Research Institute](#)
- [Volkswagen Group of America](#)