

# VOLKSWAGEN

GROUP OF AMERICA

September 5, 2018

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and Senator Peters:

I write today on behalf of Volkswagen Group of America in strong support of the AV START Act. I commend you for your hard work in crafting this legislation that establishes a clear regulatory framework and enhanced safety oversight over the testing and deployment of automated vehicle technology. I urge the Senate to take up and pass this important legislation in the next few weeks so that automated vehicle technology will deliver its full promise of improved safety, mobility and reduced emissions in the United States.

The alternative to enacting the AV START Act this year should be unacceptable to everyone: the status quo of 40,000 fatalities per year and a patchwork approach that will stall testing and deployment of automated vehicle technologies in the United States. To date, the United States is at the forefront of investments in automated vehicle research and development, testing and pilot programs, putting America in the lead on this cutting edge innovation. Many other countries are eager to attract similar investments and the high technology jobs that come with them. 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.

For generations we have looked to technology to make our roads and vehicles safer, including making great strides in helping people survive vehicle crashes when they occur. We are now on the cusp of the next great revolutionary

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breakthrough in vehicle safety – where technology can help us avoid crashes altogether and reduce the number of fatalities on our roads. Full automation can also help us increase mobility for the elderly, blind and people with disabilities offering more personal freedom and increased access to jobs. And automated vehicles can help reduce pollution and congestion since AVs are likely to be EVs, will drive more smoothly and efficiently and have fewer crashes, reducing traffic congestion.

Congress, states and innovators must continue to work together to define the mobility future together to avoid the mistakes of the past that we are now trying to unwind. Senate consideration and passage of the AV START Act in the next few weeks is a critical first step toward that goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mitch McConnell", with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

CC: Majority Leader Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer  
Senator Roy Blunt  
Senator Debbie Stabenow  
Senator Roger F. Wicker