



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
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Pallone Statement at Subcommittee Markup of Draft Autonomous Vehicle Legislation

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks at a Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection Subcommittee markup of the, “Staff Draft on Highly Automated Vehicle Testing and Deployment.”*

Today we begin the markup process on a draft bill regarding self-driving vehicles. I welcome the work that has gone into getting us to this markup. While we have not reached a complete bipartisan agreement, the draft before us reflects true bipartisan negotiations.

I want to start by extending a thank you to Chairmen Latta and Walden. The negotiations since the June hearing on 14 draft bills have been constructive, and I appreciate your willingness to work with us. The deployment of self-driving cars is not a partisan issue, and I will hold you to your pledge to continue working with us as the bill moves through the legislative process.

There are potential benefits for safety in the deployment of self-driving cars. There are also challenges, such as increased cybersecurity and privacy exposure risks and safety issues regarding the interaction between human-operated and computer-operated vehicles.

At the June legislative hearing, I pointed out a number of concerns I had with the majority’s 14 drafts. We’ve made a lot of progress on many of those concerns. Now, the federal government’s lead auto safety agency will have an active role in ensuring that self-driving cars can be successfully deployed on our roads. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will be required to do rulemakings and industry will be required to submit Safety Assessment Certifications that detail how their vehicles are tested and function on the road.

The legislation also includes a new and important cybersecurity provision. Any manufacturer entering this market must have cybersecurity practices in place before their cars are sold. And because human drivers are going to be driving vehicles on our streets and highways for

the foreseeable future, the bill before us also contains legislative initiatives geared toward protecting drivers and passengers, including requirements to ensure kids are not unintentionally left in hot cars and that all new cars have the latest technology in their headlamps.

This bill also ensures NHTSA is able to consider whether a car functions as intended, not just whether it meets a specific standard. We also encourage NHTSA to come up with a plan on how it can alter testing using ranges so that cars cannot be built just to meet a particular test. Moreover, I am pleased with the removal of the provision that sought to further limit public access under the Freedom of Information Act.

Of course, the bill before us is not perfect. It does not truly deal with data security or privacy. Nor does it include an authorization of appropriations for NHTSA to help it handle these major changes in auto technology. And yes, more work needs to be done. We still need to deal with its broad preemption and bracketed exemption issues. I am committed to continuing to work together to address these issues. I wish we would have addressed these areas before this markup today because that is the point of our subcommittees. The majority of our work should occur in the subcommittees.

I want to thank Ranking Member Schakowsky for working tirelessly to get us to this point, as well as other members of this subcommittee for their ongoing work.

I remain hopeful we can produce a bipartisan self-driving car deployment bill that has safety as its first priority.

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