

Autos 2050 Conference

**Remarks Prepared for Delivery by
U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao
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Thank you, David - you're terrific! It's great to be here tonight.

This is such an exciting time for our country – and the U.S. auto industry.

- In 2018, the U.S. economy grew at a rate of 2.9 percent;
- The economy has added more than 5.3 million jobs since the 2016 election;
- And so far this year, several automakers have announced billions of dollars in new investments that will increase production, expand operations and create thousands of new jobs.

New technologies and innovations are being developed that have the potential to save lives, revolutionize travel and commerce, and provide new mobility options for underserved communities, such as the elderly and people with disabilities.

At the Department of Transportation, we have three priorities.

First, safety is my number one priority. It is the foundation of everything the Department does. The second priority is rebuilding and refurbishing infrastructure to enable the growth of a vibrant economy, keep our country productive and competitive, and improve quality of life for everyone.

The third priority is preparing for the future, by engaging with new, emerging technologies to address legitimate public concerns about safety, security, and privacy without hampering innovation.

As you know, the pace of innovation is breathtaking – especially in the auto business.

New entrants to the mobility market have introduced several new business models, including car sharing, ride sharing, connected vehicles and last-mile transportation.

Several advanced safety technologies come standard in many new vehicles today. These help monitor blind spots, prevent collisions and even detect driver fatigue. But let me reiterate that even though these technologies have the ability to improve safety, the driver must still remain fully engaged and attentive to the driving task.

As we prepare for these exciting new developments in transportation, the Department is also updating its approach to autonomous vehicle technology.

Beginning in 2017, the Department and its modes have held 11 major autonomous

vehicle technology events. These include summits, listening sessions, and the publication of two guidance documents.

Automated Driving Systems 2.0: A Vision for Safety, and an update – *Automated Vehicles 3.0* – published on October 4, 2018. I am pleased to note that 12 manufacturers have released their Safety Self-Assessments, which are linked to the Department’s website for the public to read. The Department applauds this transparency and encourages others to do the same.

As you know, AVs have the potential to affect how we live, travel and work.

The potential of this technology to increase safety is especially noteworthy. Human error is a factor in most automobile crashes. As a result, more than 37,000 lives were lost on our roads and highways in 2017 alone. Automated vehicle technology has the potential to reduce highway fatalities.

But autonomous technology is still in its early stages of development. And the public has concerns about the safety, security and privacy of this new technology. For example, a survey released in March found that 71 percent of Americans are afraid to ride in fully-autonomous vehicles.

These concerns must be addressed, because without public acceptance, automated technology will never reach its full potential. That’s why I consistently challenge Silicon Valley and auto manufacturers to help educate the public about their vision of automated technology and its potential benefits.

In addition to automobiles, the Department regulates the safety of highways and bridges, railways, transit, pipelines, aviation and trucking. However, new innovations are often cross-modal in nature, and don’t fit neatly into a single mode structure.

That’s why, on March 14th, the Department announced the creation of the Non-traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology – or NETT – Council, to help ensure that traditional modal silos don’t impede the deployment of new technology. Going forward, there will now be a one-stop shop for innovators and stakeholders to work with the Department on new cross-modal technologies.

Let me note that this Administration’s approach to new transportation technologies is performance-based, rather than highly prescriptive. We are not in the business of picking technology winners and losers. Our philosophy is to encourage the widest possible development of **safe** new transportation technologies, so consumers and communities can choose the mix of options that suits them best.

Your products exemplify the American dream of affluence and the American ideal of freedom.

So thank you for everything you are doing to create new, innovative and safe mobility options for consumers. Have a great dinner.

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