← SPEECHES AND PRESENTATIONS

SAE Government/Industry Meeting

Opening Keynote • Heidi R. King, NHTSA Deputy Administrator

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Thank you, Dan, for your kind welcome.

Good morning everyone, and welcome to another exciting day! This really is a special event for me; I have so much to tell you about the work we have been doing at NHTSA.

I hope you have had a chance this week to view the cherry blossoms around the Tidal Basin, and that you – like me – noticed that, as stunning as they are, they simply can't compete with the exciting growth we are all experiencing together! That's because our work together to improve safety and mobility will endure long after this week together, and that the actions we are taking will protect our children and our children's children for years to come.

Seeing so many of you here in Washington over the past couple of days has energized me for all of our work together to improve the safety and accessibility of motor vehicle transportation, and to pave the path toward further technological improvements. I care deeply about the success that we have and will achieve together.

Today, first, I'd like to review some of our accomplishments in transportation safety in the past year.

Second, I would like to tell you about some work in progress.

Third, I would like to speak about the SAFE Vehicles Rule. I realize I haven't had the opportunity to speak with most of you since the close of the public comment period, and many of you wonder how that work is progressing.

Lastly, let's chat about the concept of a comprehensive regulatory framework for automated vehicles.

We have a lot to cover together, so let's get started.

First, safety accomplishments.

What a year it has been!

Automatic Emergency Braking is making great strides. Ten automakers report equipping more than half of the vehicles they produced between September 1, 2017, and August 31, 2018, with automatic emergency braking. Three manufacturers report 93 percent or higher conformance with the voluntary commitment. The auto industry deserves recognition for proactively adopting an advanced safety technology that can do more than just help people survive crashes, it can help avoid crashes altogether.

Manufacturers continue to address safety through recalls. Through the year 2018, the industry initiated 914 recalls affecting more than 29 million vehicles.

We know that a recall alone is not enough, but that we all need to take action to repair those vehicles to save lives.

And the nation is making progress on the largest, most complex vehicle safety recall in history: Defective Takata airbags.

In 2018, approximately 7.3 million airbags were repaired in an estimated 6 million vehicles, and more than 30 million airbags in all have been repaired to date. Innovative public awareness campaigns included targeted neighborhood campaigns and multi-lingual outreach to underserved communities. Some automakers sent holiday cards to affected vehicle owners. And 10 State Departments of Motor Vehicles are participating in outreach to increase completion rates.

Safety requires that we encourage safe decisions by people, too; we continue to pursue safer behaviors and decisions by drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Last year, NHTSA launched an initiative to combat the growing threat of drug-impaired driving. After traveling the country to learn from and work with experts in many of our communities, and launching a new public awareness

campaign last Fall, I'm proud to say that actions across the nation are already strengthening the ability of law enforcement, prosecutors, toxicology labs, and others to address this deadly problem. Remember: If you feel different, you drive different. And, drive high, get a DUI.

As the relationship between cars and drivers changes, so do the ways we talk about safety. In 2018, at least 13 innovative companies showed leadership in both safety and transparency by publishing Voluntary Safety Self Assessments following the framework laid out in A Vision for Safety, 2.0 – the 2017 NHTSA guidance focused on SAE Levels 3, 4, and 5 systems. And we hear that more of these important, confidence-building safety assessments are underway and could be released soon.

This past October, DOT released "Preparing for the Future of Transportation: Automated Vehicles 3.0." This is the first multi-modal guidance addressing emerging transportation technology. We believe this approach strikes the right balance by providing a framework for the safe testing and development of ADS-equipped vehicles while leaving room for innovation, which DOT believes could save lives, reduce congestion, and expand mobility.

NHTSA has begun to address regulatory barriers in existing FMVSS with a series of requests for comment, and we have already eliminated a barrier related to the testing of innovative technologies: For example, NHTSA has taken a first step in streamlining the processing of Petitions for Exemption from FMVSS by eliminating the requirement for the agency to determine if a petition is complete before publishing summary notices for public comment. NHTSA recently requested comments on petitions for temporary exemption from GM and Nuro. We look forward to public comment that will inform our analysis and decisions about these and future petitions related to the production and deployment of non-compliant vehicles. We expect to propose additional improvements to this exemption process soon, and look forward to your comments on that effort as well.

When a crash happens, we need to be ready. The Nation's emergency response system is growing stronger as well. NHTSA's Office of EMS, working closely with partners across the Emergency Medical System, published EMS Agenda 2050, a strategic vision for the future of the nation's critical emergency medical response capability.

To improve emergency response and public safety throughout the nation, NHTSA, together with the National Telecommunication and Information Administration, published a rule to provide for grants to support next generation improvements to the 9-1-1 system.

Thank you everyone for all your work to improve roadway safety. Our efforts to improve safety together are working. After two years of historic increases in highway fatalities, the nation witnessed a modest decline in 2017, and early figures suggest that the decline is likely to continue when final statistics are tallied for 2018.

Many more lifesaving efforts are underway.

At NHTSA, we have restarted our work to understand opportunities to improve the New Car Assessment Program, or NCAP. Your comments and your participation in the public meeting last Fall are informing the development of thoughtful next steps to make sure we are providing consumers with information that is useful for the wide variety of consumers that rely on motorized transportation.

Vehicle-to-infrastructure and vehicle-to-vehicle communication capabilities continue to develop. By the end of 2018, more than 18,000 vehicles had been deployed with aftermarket DSRC-based V2X communications devices and more than 1,000 infrastructure V2X devices had been installed at intersections and along roadways in 25 States. The Department of Transportation sought public comment on how current and future communication technologies could be used for V2X, and received more than 160 public comments.

Many of us continue to work together toward a cybersecure transportation ecosystem. I cannot stress enough the importance of designing new products with cybersecurity in mind, not just applying a patch as an after-thought. Both safety and consumer confidence depends on our getting this right. Don't forget the early lessons learned from the Cyberstorm exercise last year: Be ready, know who to call, and communicate, communicate, communicate. We all need to build cybersecurity into our planning, and be ready for vulnerabilities that do occur, so that damages will be mitigated by a quick and effective response to cyber threats.

Earlier this week, SAE and NHTSA convened a joint vehicle cybersecurity workshop. All of us appreciate -- and will benefit from -- the diverse participation and open discussions around difficult questions, and the actions that industry will take in response. A threat to one of us is a threat to all.

Internationally, United Nations Working Parties 29 and 1 have both turned their discussions to emerging vehicle technologies. Both working parties seek to understand the potential of emerging safety technologies, like automated driving systems. I'm very pleased to note that the international community recognizes the importance of remaining in step with emerging technology. The United States, together with Canada and Japan, are working to educate other nations in the importance of a voluntary approach with respect to any technology that is still developing.

Remaining in step requires that we be able to understand one another – and more importantly – the traveling public. I am proud to support ongoing industry efforts to develop clear, consumer-friendly nomenclature to describe some of the new vehicle technologies. Consumer research reveals the importance of these efforts. I'm not surprised that consumers express wariness of automated driving systems, because those systems are still under development. Some consumer research reveals a lack of consumer understanding of, and confidence in, features sold in cars today, features that many of us experience for the first time in a rental vehicle, such as automatic emergency braking and active lane keeping.

The need for clear communication is not only a problem for consumers, but also for those of us in government and industry. Have you noticed the vast confusion regarding the difference between testing and actual deployment of prototype Automated Driving Systems? I hope you will join me in the effort to distinguish carefully and clearly in your speech - and in your written communications - between the testing or demonstrating that you are doing today, and the full deployment that you are working toward in the future – when safe systems are fully developed. If we cannot get this language correct when we talk among ourselves, I do not know how we can help anxious consumers distinguish between the testing and development that comprises most of our activities today, and the potential for safe commercial deployment that many of you are working so hard to bring about.

There is so much to be proud of in our work together. I haven't even begun to describe the rigorous work together with NHTSA's vehicle safety research team, leading research that is science- and fact-based, so that you and I will be ready to pursue vehicle safety with the technologies that are coming to market now and in the future.

How we approach policy at NHTSA

I hear from some of you that NHTSA is kind of slow, and sometimes I feel that way, too - especially when it relates to any action that would make it possible to introduce a potential improvement in safety. And I know that it can be frustrating.

But I must tell you: in developing and implementing new policy, we must be very careful that our passion for change and safety does not cause us to act precipitously.

We need to make sure that our policies are thoughtful, that they're grounded in sound science, and that they're based on sufficient data and research, and robust real-world engineering, so that in our passion to make way for the new and to save lives, we don't take an action without first

considering the potential unintended consequences and the potential harm that might be caused by haste.

We try every step of the way to make sure that when NHTSA develops a program or a regulation, or when NHTSA issues information, that it's based in engineering and science, and it's rigorous so you can trust it.

That does mean that NHTSA cannot act as quickly as you or I would sometimes like. But safety depends on a thoughtful, data, and science-driven approach.

I know that you – and the public – would not stand for less.

Speaking of the obligation to rely on data and science, I'd like to update you on the SAFE Vehicles Rule.

I know that the SAFE Vehicles Rule is very important to many of you in this room. In fact, it is important to everyone in the country. The proposed rule addressing light-duty vehicle greenhouse gas emissions and fuel economy standards last year attracted some 700,000 public comments, many of them quite lengthy and substantive. My colleagues at NHTSA and EPA are working together to ensure that this important rule will rely on the best possible engineering and economic information, data, and science, and that we review the comments thoroughly.

Many of you wonder when the final rule will be issued. I understand your eagerness. The two agencies are working together toward a final rule as quickly as we possibly can while also giving thoughtful consideration to the public comments, to ensure that we rely on the best possible information and suggestions to develop the final rule. I assure you, because the SAFE Vehicles Rule only establishes a minimum standard, there is nothing in the rule that would prevent any auto manufacturer from designing and building highly fuel-efficient vehicles, including battery electric vehicles, hybrids, and plug-in hybrids. I am excited - we are all excited - to witness the expansion of the diverse designs and power trains, providing more consumer choice.

Next month is the 10-year anniversary of the first combined NHTSA/EPA national fuel-economy and greenhouse-gas standard. In 2012, the two agencies promised in the final rule that: "NHTSA's rulemaking, which will incorporate findings from the midterm evaluation, will be a totally fresh consideration of all relevant information and fresh balancing of statutory and other relevant factors in order to determine the maximum feasible CAFÉ standards for MYs 2022–2025." Together, EPA and NHTSA have been working to meet that commitment.

Together, we have also been working to address questions raised in the earlier rulemakings with respect to the potential impact of this important rule on the safety of the motoring public.

We all prioritize safety, and for that reason we cannot overlook the potential safety impacts. We know that newer cars are safer and cleaner than older cars. We also know that, because there are already more cars than adults in our country – about 270 million cars and 260 million adults, which translates to about 240 million licensed drivers – consumers can choose whether to keep their older car or to purchase a newer, safer, cleaner car. Fuel economy standards that dramatically increase the price of a new car can hinder safety by discouraging people from replacing their older, dirtier cars with cleaner, safer, newer cars.

We are working to make sure the analysis is as rigorous as possible, but the fundamental principles are robust and bear repeating: Newer cars are safer and cleaner than older cars. Consumers are more likely to upgrade to newer, cleaner, safer cars if the regulations don't raise the price beyond consumers' means.

You have my continued commitment that one national program will ensure consumers can choose a vehicle that is safe. A vehicle that is cleaner than their old car, and affordable. You have my continued commitment that the SAFE Vehicles Rule will not limit consumer access to highly fuel-efficient and low-emissions vehicles that are so important to many consumers.

Last, but not least, let's talk about the regulatory framework for automated vehicles.

I believe that each of you has heard the news that Autonomous Vehicles, at all SAE levels, are regulated now. You have, right?

The framework applies to automated vehicles up to SAE level 5, and I'm very pleased to report that the framework is flexible enough to adapt to changing designs. It also applies to components of those vehicles.

The regulatory framework is not only flexible, but comprehensive. And NHTSA is already standing by to implement these safety policies for highly automated vehicles and equipment.

I've recently heard this framework serves as a model for automotive safety regulation in other countries.

Highly automated vehicles, and partially automated vehicles, and vehicle equipment, are all regulated just like any other motorized vehicle in the United States. They are subject to the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, and they are subject to recall for any safety-related defect in the design, manufacture, or performance.

Why does this matter?

Because testing, developing, and deploying highly automated vehicles on public roads has generated some anxiety among some members of the public. Perhaps, if we all recognized more clearly, and more directly, that all motorized vehicles and equipment sold in the U.S. are regulated, and that a system is in place to address any safety defect, the public could develop more trust in the emerging technology and those who are building it.

But that doesn't mean that we can't begin to think about – and to craft –more modern, flexible performance standards for safe motorized vehicles.

Think about it: At the most basic level, a safe vehicle must be able to achieve just four things:

- Don't crash into things
- Protect the occupants
- Obey traffic laws, and
- Get where it's going

Everything we do in the design, manufacture, and performance of a motorized vehicle is directed toward achieving just those four things. Is it possible that we can reconsider how to reliably and objectively demonstrate that vehicles can achieve these four critical performance goals for vehicles that are so innovative that we don't yet imagine them?

I think we can.

It won't happen overnight. But following a thoughtful process – prioritizing safety, and listening to the data and engineering – I think that such a goal is worth considering.

Communication is key to the success of our sector.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: During times of change, it is more important than ever to over-emphasize the importance of open and clear communication. To share information, and to share ideas. To choose words about which we have developed a common understanding and that best convey meaning to the audience, and to commit to listening to -- and hearing -- stakeholders.

You have my commitment, and that of all of NHTSA, to be transparent where we can, to follow the data, the engineering, and the science. To listen to you.

And always to prioritize safety for our diverse consumers, friends, and neighbors across this diverse country.

The public expects no less from us.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

1-888-327-4236
1-800- 424-9153 (TTY)