



ASSOCIATION OF
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING
ORGANIZATIONS

March 31, 2021

Mr. James C. Owens
Acting Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: "Framework for Automated Driving System Safety" (Docket No. NHTSA-2020-0106)

Dear Acting Administrator Owens:

The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) is pleased to offer the following comments in response to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Framework for Automated Driving System Safety (Docket No. NHTSA-2020-0106) that was published in the Federal Register on December 3, 2020. AMPO represents the needs and interests of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) nationwide and serves as a liaison between MPOs and the federal government.

MPOs are stewards of the transportation system within their metropolitan planning areas. They work with stakeholder agencies to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods and therefore are focusing on the safe deployment of connected and automated vehicle (CAV) technologies with minimal disruptions or negative impacts to the transportation system and its users. MPOs are also concerned with ensuring that all transportation users, including youth, low income, minority, and elderly populations and individuals with disabilities are provided equal access to the transportation system and the benefits of CAV technology, and do not receive a disproportionate share of any negative consequences as CAVs are deployed and implemented.

A major challenge facing MPOs is the considerable uncertainty in the timeline for deployment of these technologies and the impacts on safety, security, capacity, congestion, mobility, mode options, freight movement, and other aspects of the transportation system and built environment. The current unknowns make it challenging to represent a future with CAV technology in the long-range planning process, scenario planning, and MPO products, such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Despite this AMPO and its member organizations look

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forward to our continued work in partnership with the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the FHWA to develop and provide important resources that will allow for MPOs to successfully leverage the benefits of CAV technology and ensure a safe and equitable transportation system for all users.

AMPO and its members recognize the tremendous potential benefits that connected vehicles, autonomous vehicles, and automated driving systems could bring to the surface transportation system, including improved safety, increased capacity, reduced congestion, and reduced environmental impacts. AMPO and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) members face similar challenges, opportunities, and constraints as CAVs are deployed. AMPO supports the comments and concerns provided by AASHTO along with the additional comments below:

1. Support and encourage the MPO role of providing public, partner, and stakeholder education, involvement, and engagement.
2. Support the MPO role of maintaining the state of good repair to provide venues to test successful CAV technology.
3. Require a more demanding safety standard for vehicles with ADS acknowledging that with the deployment of technology the chance of errors otherwise seen from human drivers is reduced.
 - This could include providing aid and incentives to manufacturers who commit to reaching the higher safety standard while allowing AV developers who are unwilling or unable to meet the standard to still deploy their vehicles during the current early deployment stage; the understanding being that those vehicles are safer than human drivers, improving safety incrementally until the technology and businesses mature to a point that a higher standard can be maintained.
4. NHTSA should use the rulemaking to begin to examine whether safe deployment of ADS requires an extension of NHTSA's regulatory scope beyond the vehicle and vehicle components to the roadway infrastructure elements that may be an integral part of ADS. Such an inclusion of the infrastructure elements that may be part of ADS may require legislative involvement.
5. Improve CAVs ability to detect and avoid bicyclists and pedestrians.
6. Create a more seamless transition between level 2 and 3 automation where control switches from the vehicle back to the driver to reduce potential conflict.
7. Place an emphasis on data governance and privacy.
 - Assess the vulnerability of CAV systems and mitigate risks as it relates to cyber security, hacking and unauthorized usage.
 - Protect the identity of those using or riding in CAVs and the information that's being collected about them. Furthermore, identify purposes for which this information should not be used.
 - Good data-sharing practice between the public and private sector should be encouraged and the possibility of the development of a national voluntary repository of aggregate and secured data should be explored.

AMPO appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Framework for Automated Driving System Safety. We also appreciate the USDOT and FHWA's leadership and efforts in ensuring the safe implementation of connected and autonomous vehicle technology in coordination with state and local transportation agencies. We look forward to continuing working with the USDOT and FHWA on this

subject. If you have any questions or would like to further discuss AMPO's comments, please contact Bill Keyrouze, AMPO Executive Director.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William T. Keyrouze". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W' and a prominent 'T'.

William Keyrouze
Executive Director

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