

STATEMENT BY MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING® (MADD)
IN RESPONSE TO FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENT
REGARDING AGENCY INFORMATION COLLECTION ACTIVITIES – DRIVER ALCOHOL
DETECTION SYSTEM FOR SAFETY FIELD OPERATIONAL TEST

Agency: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Document Citation: 86 FR 74427

Page: 74427-74429 (3 pages)

Docket Number: NHTSA-2021-0085

Document Number: 2021-28363

Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) supports NHTSA's request for an extension of the information collection deadline for its "Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety Field Operational Test," but urges much more aggressive action to help meet the deadline mandated in the advanced technology provision of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, passed by Congress on November 5, 2021, and signed into law by President Biden on November 15, 2021.

The law directs NHTSA to initiate a rulemaking process and set the final standard within three years for impaired driving safety equipment on all new cars. Automakers are then given two to three years to implement the safety standard. NHTSA's adherence to the deadline mandated in the law is vital to the lives of the American public.

That timeline is also achievable. As Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS) President and CEO Robert Strassburger [told the Washington Post](#) in November 2021, the technology developed by ACTS, with substantial financial support from NHTSA, is expected to be ready within the timeline spelled out by Congress. "We're starting in a very good place," Mr. Strassburger told the Post. The article noted that ACTS' research found overwhelming public acceptance of drunk driving prevention technology with about three of four drivers in support.

As NHTSA is aware, the ACTS technology, known as the Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety ([DADSS](#)) Research Program, was launched in 2008. This collaboration between the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS) and NHTSA has had 14 years to develop its technology.

While Mr. Strassburger's comments to the Washington Post are reassuring, it is important to note why meeting the deadline in the infrastructure law is essential.

- By adhering to the statutory timeline required by the law, new cars equipped with the NHTSA-directed technology identified through this rulemaking process could start rolling off the assembly line as soon as 2026 or 2027.

- The motor vehicle safety standard resulting from the rulemaking will save more than 9,400 lives a year, [according to a study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#), and will ultimately lead to an end to drunk driving.
- Any delay in meeting the deadline would result in many thousands more Americans killed and injured at the hands of drunk drivers.

Drunk driving kills and injures thousands of people each year on our nation's roads.

- In the U.S., someone dies in a drunk driving crash every 52 minutes.
- Drunk driving crashes account for more than one quarter of U.S. traffic deaths.
- In 2019, DUI crashes killed more than 10,000 people and injured another 300,000.
- Alcohol-related traffic deaths spiked by 9% in 2020 compared to 2019, even as vehicle miles traveled dropped by more than 430 billion miles during the pandemic.
- Drunk and impaired driving also inflicts an enormous cost to our economy and taxpayers. NHTSA noted in its report entitled [The Economic and Societal Impact Of Motor Vehicle Crashes](#) that in crashes where the blood-alcohol concentration was .08 or higher, comprehensive societal costs exceeded \$201 billion in 2010. In effect, drunk driving crashes cost every person in the U.S. more than \$600 a year.

According to a NHTSA report released in January 2022, the number of people killed on U.S. roadways sharply increased during the first nine months of 2021:

- An estimated 31,720 people died in crashes during the January – September 2021 timeframe, marking a nearly 12% increase from the 28,325 fatalities in the first nine months of 2020.
- The new estimate is the highest number of deaths during the first nine months of any year since 2006.
- About 8,000 more people were killed on U.S. roads in the first nine months of 2021 compared with 2014.

Americans deserve and Congress requires aggressive action by NHTSA to meet the deadline mandated in the advanced technology provision of the infrastructure law. Anything less dooms countless more families in the U.S. to continue losing loved ones to drunk driving crashes and being tragically injured themselves. That result is unacceptable, and should be as unacceptable to NHTSA and ACTS as it is to MADD.

Sincerely,



Alex Otte
MADD National President