

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Capitol, Room 128
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Capitol, Room 146A
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 184
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
Hart Senate Office Building, Room 125
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed,

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) Appropriations legislation, we write to express our strong support for the Department of Transportation's (DOT) efforts to advance connected and automated vehicle (CAV) technology. Specifically, we request the committee include \$60 million to support the accelerated creation of a national CAV research, testing, product development, validation, and certification facility within the United States

The auto industry is in the midst of a seismic technological shift that will revolutionize the transportation of people and goods in our lifetime. Advances in CAV technology will improve transportation safety and efficiency and will reduce emissions and fuel consumption. DOT's FY17 budget proposal includes \$200 million in funding to accelerate the development and adoption of CAV technologies by funding large-scale deployment pilots to test connected vehicle systems and ensure interoperability of vehicles and CAV technologies. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has stated that a focus of the program will be to support the development of tools necessary to measure safety performance of highly automated vehicles, including roadworthiness testing, simulations that measure safety performance, and tools to support interoperability of CAV technologies.

It is critical that the Federal government play a leadership role in ensuring that CAV technologies are safely developed and tested in a thorough and thoughtful manner, aligned with voluntary industry standards. To that end, it is requested that \$60 million be devoted in FY2017 to support the accelerated creation of a national research, testing, product development, validation, and certification facility within the United States. Currently, no single facility exists that meets these needs. Federal support for such a facility will help ensure that future public and private sector investment in CAV will be rewarded with safer, more efficient transportation

networks. Moreover, federal support will help the United States maintain and grow its leadership role worldwide in automotive technology.

To ensure that appropriated funds are spent effectively and efficiently, we urge that DOT be directed to take into account a variety of factors in selecting a facility, including: strong support from state and local governments and a firm commitment to cost sharing; strong support from the U.S. automotive sector and proximity to manufacturers and suppliers for more effective collaboration; opportunities for collaboration with academia and existing CAV testing facilities; and an ability to offer a combination of simulation, track testing, and on-road testing, including testing on the widest variety of road types and under all relevant weather conditions. We also believe it is critical that the facility be in a position to open within three years, recognizing the urgent need for testing to keep up with the rapid growth of innovation in this area.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you to advance the development and deployment of this revolutionary and life-saving technology. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Amy Nagahashi with Senator Peters at Amy_Nagahashi@peters.senate.gov or Jason LaGosh with Senator Stabenow at Jason_LaGosh@stabenow.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator