

May 5, 2020

Chairman Roger Wicker
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
U.S. Senate

Ranking Member Maria Cantwell
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
U.S. Senate

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell,

The Consumer Technology Association (CTA) represents those molding the future. Our more than 2200 member companies include many working to make the driving experience safer by automated driving technologies and assisted and self-driving cars. Many of our members are helping avoid disease spread by using automation to serve consumers.

The pandemic has highlighted how technology and data can improve public safety, provide consumers access to supplies and connect them remotely when staying at home literally saves lives, both by ensuring social distancing and lowering the number of fatal car accidents. Technology is helping deliver food, medicine and household goods to millions of isolated Americans. Self-driving vehicle companies are converting their vehicles to deliver supplies.

Thanks to a partnership between Beep, NAVYA, and the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, driverless vehicles are delivering medical supplies and COVID-19 tests to the Mayo Clinic in Florida. Similarly, Nuro is using the R2, which was granted the first autonomous vehicle exemption from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in California for contactless delivery to ensure healthcare workers have the supplies they need in the safest and most efficient manner possible. NHTSA has recognized the potential for autonomous systems, putting out a call to stakeholders for innovative solutions to the crisis.

This crisis has shown how self-driving vehicles and automated delivery technologies can help people get what they need, avoid disease and save lives. Now we need the policies to match. While these limited projects are great, we risk falling behind as public policy lags. As the technology for self-driving vehicles evolves, testing and deployment of automated technologies are hitting roadblocks due to a collection of confusing and conflicting state rules and testing restrictions and federal limitations.

I testified in February before the House Consumer Protection and Commerce subcommittee on the potential for self-driving vehicles to boost the economy, save lives, aid seniors and those with disabilities and provide critical services. CTA has worked closely with the House and Senate

committees to advance the AV START Act last Congress and continues to work to advance a bill this year.

While we must be deliberate when safety is involved, Congress can cut red tape and protect the public. Adapting outdated laws and rules to fit innovation will require creativity and flexibility. If we make innovation and beneficial uses a priority, we can enable technology to flourish and solve problems we face today.

As Congress considers longer term solutions in response to this crisis, there is an opportunity to broaden the reach of contactless and driverless delivery. Congress should pass a self-driving bill to enable broader testing and deploy automated technologies. Let's remove unnecessary roadblocks and create a regulatory path to enable this technology to come to fruition, so it is ready for everyone who needs it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Shapiro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" and last name "Shapiro" clearly distinguishable.

Gary Shapiro
President and CEO