**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION**

Nominations

Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.

**DEMOCRATIC QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD**

**COVER PAGE**

**Ms. Oz**

**RANKING MEMBER MARIA CANTWELL (D-WA)**

***Safe NAS Integration.*** OST-R's Highly Automated Systems Safety Center of Excellence (HASS COE) issued a 2024 report on Electronic Conspicuity which indicated that equipping airspace users with technologies like ADS-B supports the safe integration of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) into the National Airspace System (NAS) and also creates a safe and secure environment for future evolutions.

*Question 1:* Ms. Oz, if confirmed, how will you use your research role at the Department to help inform the safe integration of UAS into the NAS?

*Answer:* If confirmed, I will work with OST-R’s Highly Automated Systems Safety Center of Excellence to research and advance technologies like Electronic Conspicuity, and work cross modally with the FAA and OST-X to foster the deployment of new technologies that are safe and secure within the NAS.

*Question 2:* Do you support ensuring that more operators in the NAS are equipped with ADS-B Out and other senses and avoid safety technologies to better achieve this goal and help the commercial drone industry move forward?

*Answer:* If confirmed, I will work with the Senate Commerce Committee to develop and deploy those safety technologies which are appropriate to help the commercial drone industry move forward.

***Volpe Center.*** The Volpe Center, which would fall under your authority if confirmed, is DOT’s world-class transportation research center in Cambridge, MA. Its focus is on developing innovative solutions to transportation challenges. Most of Volpe’s 600 federal staff are technical professionals with advanced degrees. Volpe receives no direct appropriation from Congress. All of its work is funded by fees from project sponsors. About 85% of that work is sponsored by DOT modal offices, including FAA, FRA, and FHWA.

*Question 1:* Do you support this business model and, if confirmed, would you commit to working with DOT operating administrations to continue to direct research to the Volpe Center?

*Answer:* I am not yet at the agency and therefore do not know the specific details for Volpe’s business model.

***Bureau of Transportation Statistics.*** If confirmed, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) would fall under your authority. BTS is one of 13 federal statistical agencies. BTS collects, compiles, and analyzes data on all modes of transportation, and that data provides critical context to transportation decision makers, including Congress. BTS data is expected to be objective, independent of political influence, and unbiased.

*Question 1:* If confirmed, do you commit to supporting BTS in its mission of providing transportation data that is independent and free from political bias?

*Answer:* If confirmed, I will support the entities under my authority, including BTS in its mission of providing transportation data that is independent and free from political bias.

*Question 2:* If confirmed, would you support increasing resources for the Bureau?

*Answer:* I am not yet at the agency and therefore cannot comment on the BTS’ needs.

***University Transportation Centers.*** The Trump Administration $54 million in funding to University Transportation Centers because they were too radical. This includes centers performing cutting edge research into how AI can improve the efficiency of transportation systems.

*Question 1:* If confirmed, will you commit to awarding these funds through a new Notice of Funding Opportunity?

*Answer:* If confirmed, I will support the agencies in the Department in their funding efforts, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget.

*Question 2:* If confirmed, would you commit to fairly and unbiasedly reviewing the applications of the Universities that lost funding?

*Answer:* If confirmed, I will commit to following the policies in fairly and unbiasedly reviewing funding applications.

**SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR (D-MN)**

***1. Research Investments.*** The Department of Transportation’s Office of Science & Technology Research works with public, private, and academic sector partners on research collaboration, coordinates research investment, and oversees the development of Annual Modal Research Plans.

Do you commit to being an advocate for science and maintaining academic partnerships at the Department?

If confirmed, I will be an advocate for application of the scientific method in analysis and replicable academic research.

**SENATOR BEN RAY LUJÁN (D-NM)**

1. The role of the Department of Transportation is to ensure all vehicles, including those equipped with partially or fully automated driving systems, are safe for all road users. Studies show that by 2030, nearly 70% of all vehicles sold in the US will have “some level of driving automation, specifically SAE levels 2 and above”[[1]](#footnote-1). One of the most prevalent issues leading to AV crashes is over-trust in the automated system, leading to lack of oversight by the human in the loop. Trust in these systems is built on the assumption that the government is performing its oversight duties to ensure cars and roads are safe for everyone.
   1. What do you plan to do to ensure drivers’ trust in AV technology is not misguided?

If confirmed, I will work with NHTSA on testing, and comprehensive educational and training programs to ensure drivers’ trust in AV technology is not misguided.

* 1. How do you plan to enforce safety mechanisms in all levels of autonomous vehicles so we can all benefit from the promise of these technologies?

If confirmed, I will coordinate with NHTSA, key stakeholders, and the Secretary on the benefits of these safety mechanisms.

1. What do you believe are the biggest safety concerns or challenges that are unique to autonomous vehicles? Please outline your answers for varying levels of automation as necessary.

In general, errors in vehicle control, cybersecurity, spoofing GPS/sensors, ransomware, and hacking are some of the primary safety concerns unique to AVs. If confirmed, I will work with NHTSA to coordinate appropriate safety mechanisms in all levels of autonomous vehicles.

Levels 0-2 driver assistance/partial automation: Human Factors (Distractions)

Level 3 conditional automation: Response Time (Disengagements)

Level 4 self-driving: Environmental Conditions (E.g. Sensor and perception limitations include snow, fog, glare or heavy rain when the system cannot see or maneuver around road furniture or other vehicles

1. During your testimony, I asked you about a quote attributed to you, in which you stated "Keeping the project quiet enabled Google to test under the radar of public opinion and lawmakers. We just didn't want the program to slow down for any reason."[[2]](#footnote-2) This was regarding Google’s decision not to inform the public or lawmakers about testing its self-driving cars on public roads. You told me the goal was “keeping the engineering teams focused” and ensuring “there was no distraction”. I understand you were not at the company at the time, but you did defend their decisions. Do you support Google’s decision to keep the public and lawmakers in the dark while using public roads to test new technology?

I support transparency, especially if the matter involves safety.

1. In your testimony, you stated that self-driving cars have “proven to be safer by all metrics shown in the public records.”
   1. What data are you referencing in this answer? Please provide links to relevant reports or studies.

Independently peer-reviewed publications:

[Comparison of Waymo Rider-Only Crash Data to Human Benchmarks at 7.1 Million Miles](https://arxiv.org/pdf/2312.12675)

[Comparative Safety Performance of Autonomous- and Human Drivers: A Real-World Case Study of the Waymo One Service](https://arxiv.org/pdf/2309.01206)

* 1. Do you believe we collect sufficient safety data on autonomous vehicles? Please outline your answers for varying levels of automation as necessary.

Since I am not yet at the agency, I do not have access to data that has already been collected.

* 1. How do you plan to increase transparency and public access to safety data for autonomous vehicles, particularly when much of that information is currently treated as proprietary?

If confirmed, I will work with the relevant entities in the Department to protect proprietary data.

1. The purpose of the Department of Transportation is to ensure that every form of transportation is safe for Americans. Yes or No: Would you take an action that is in conflict with those goals due to political pressure?

If confirmed, my primary goal would be to make advanced technologies as safe as possible.

1. Yes or No: Would you go against a direct order from the President or his cabinet if you believed it put lives at risk or was illegal?

The President of the United States and his cabinet would never put lives at risk or give illegal orders.

1. Yes or No: Did Joe Biden lawfully win the 2020 presidential election?

Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

1. Yes or No: Did Donald Trump lawfully win the 2024 presidential election?

President Trump was certified as the winner of the 2024 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-seventh President on January 20, 2025.

**SENATOR JOHN HICKENLOOPER (D-CO)**

1. The Global Positioning System (GPS) provides critical services to the U.S. economy. These include precise navigation services–including during natural disasters, support for precision farming to optimize crop yields and resource management, and efficiency in fleet management and public transportation. Today, our GPS system relies on a constellation of satellites that communicate with ground-based radars to transmit key information to users. In 2018, Congress directed the Department of Transportation to demonstrate the performance of a backup and complementary Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT) system.

Ms. Oz, if confirmed, how will you lead DOT to work with interagency partners such as DOD and DHS to demonstrate and advance a backup GPS capability?

Since I’m not yet at the agency, I’m not aware of current backup GPS capabilities available. If confirmed, I will work with appropriate interagency partners to analyze this effort.

1. https://www.autobodynews.com/news/majority-of-new-vehicles-will-have-level-2-autonomy-by-2030#:~:text=The%20analysis%20by%20ABI%20Research%20predicts%20almost,1%2C%202024.%20\*%20Read%20Time:%201%20Min. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.pcmag.com/opinions/teslas-tussle-with-feds-over-model-x-accident-is-a-fools-errand> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)