

Chairman John Thune
Questions for the Record
Nomination of Blair Anderson to be
Under Secretary for Policy, U.S. Department of Transportation
June 10, 2016

In January, Secretary Foxx announced a series of steps that the Department of Transportation will take to accelerate the development and deployment of autonomous vehicles. Such milestones include the development of guidance to manufacturers and the states on the safe deployment and operation of autonomous vehicles.

- What has been your role in ensuring NHTSA can effectively respond to advanced vehicle technologies?

RESPONSE: Automated safety technologies have enormous safety potential. In my role as NHTSA Deputy Administrator, I have helped to organize the initiatives announced by the Secretary in January to advance the safe development and deployment of these technologies. Throughout this process, we have worked to include public input from industry, states, and other important stakeholders as NHTSA works to complete the following initiatives in FY 2016:

- Review current regulatory framework to identify and address any provisions that could slow this transformation;
- Identify new regulatory tools if current tools are insufficient;
- Develop deployment and operational guidance;
- Work with multiple partners to develop a model State policy.

Through regulations, the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP), and by supporting industry challenges, NHTSA is already speeding the deployment of these systems. NHTSA is conducting ongoing research addressing distinct, but related technologies in advanced in-vehicle crash avoidance systems, self-driving vehicles and Vehicle-to-Vehicle communications, and the Department has launched pilot programs to test connected and autonomous vehicle systems.

If confirmed, I hope to continue working on these issues to ensure there is a Department-wide approach to accelerating advanced technologies that have the potential to improve safety, reduce congestion and move freight more efficiently.

- Many modes at the DOT play key roles in this area of autonomous technologies. What multi-modal initiatives and processes do you think need to be improved to respond to and advance such technologies in the transportation system?

RESPONSE: Clearly autonomous technologies hold tremendous opportunities, from the potential to reduce highway fatalities, the possibility of effectively extending transit systems through first/last mile connections, providing mobility options for seniors and

disabled populations, to adding efficiency to our freight system. These opportunities are multimodal in nature and are increasingly being coordinated across the Department by the Office of Policy. If confirmed, I will ensure that coordination across modes is continually strengthened to harmonize our multimodal approach towards autonomous technologies across the Department and will aggressively accelerate that work so the full potential of this area can be realized.

Connected vehicles are one example of this coordination. In partnership, NHTSA, the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Joint Program Office, and the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Exploratory Advanced Research (EAR) Program have demonstrated the effectiveness of multimodal deployments of ever-advancing technologies in addressing the safety, mobility and congestion challenges of personal and freight movement.

The Smart City Challenge is also advancing multimodal technology demonstrations across self-driving vehicles, connected vehicles, and smart sensors. The finalist cities, which have proposed technology deployments ranging from autonomous buses to connected freight deliveries to smart traffic lights, demonstrate the necessity for both a multi-modal and a public-private approach to integrate these innovative technologies into our transportation system.

In all cases, DOT has had to work through institutional, legal, policy and technology challenges at all levels of government, and with private sector partners and technology providers.

Senator Roger Wicker
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- 1) In 2014, DOT issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking to begin implementation of vehicle to vehicle communications technology by 2016.
 - When will the vehicle-to-vehicle rule be issued?

RESPONSE: NHTSA has developed a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), a Regulatory Impact Assessment, and a Privacy Impact Assessment. The Department submitted those documents to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on January 12, 2016, and we are working closely with OMB in the hope of getting the NPRM cleared as soon as possible. When the NPRM is issued, NHTSA will consider the public comments and any new findings in developing a final rule. NHTSA looks forward to issuing a final rule soon as possible so that the life-saving benefits of vehicle-to-vehicle technology will save more lives sooner rather than later.

Senator Dean Heller
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It's no secret that tourism is the backbone of Nevada's economy. Last year, Las Vegas alone welcomed 42,000,000 visitors. Travel spending adds nearly 60 billion dollars into the Nevada economy annually, accounting for about 13 percent of the state's annual GDP.

- 1) With my support, the FAST Act created a National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure. This is important to me, since over 400,000 workers in my state are tied to the tourism industry.

As you know, this committee is responsible for providing you with advice and recommendations on the role transportation plays in facilitating mobility related to travel and tourism activities. Can you provide an update on the establishment of this committee?

RESPONSE: On Wednesday, June 1, Secretary Foxx signed the Charter that establishes the National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure. Deputy Secretary Victor Mendez is working with Department's modal administrators to identify representatives from their agencies to support this Federal Advisory Committee. Secretary Foxx will be sending letters to the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Homeland Security, Interior, and State asking them to appoint non-voting liaisons to the Committee to inform the group of tourism-related activities in their respective Departments.

The Department will also soon issue a Federal Register notice requesting nominations for the Committee, so that appointments can be made, and the first Advisory Committee meeting can take place in late September. The Department looks forward to working with a broad spectrum of stakeholders who will enable the Advisory Committee to be dynamic and to make useful recommendations.

- 2) The Department of Transportation must develop a National Travel and Tourism Infrastructure Strategic Plan intended to assess the condition of the national transportation network, identify barriers to long-haul passenger travel and tourism, and forecast travel and tourism numbers, among other things. In Nevada, we are having important debates on this at the local level. Has this strategy been discussed at the national level?

RESPONSE: The National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure will provide information, advice, and recommendations to the Secretary on matters relating to the role of intermodal transportation in facilitating mobility related to travel and tourism activities. These inputs will enable the Department to work toward the development of a Strategic Plan.

The Committee creates a unique opportunity for collaboration between the transportation

and tourism sectors in assessing transportation infrastructure concerns at all levels and creating solutions that will enable the nation to meet future travel and tourism demands. We anticipate that the robust and cross-sectional representation of stakeholders serving on the Federal Advisory Committee will provide the Department with in-depth recommendations that will inform us as we move forward in developing a Strategic Plan.

Senator Markey and I successfully included our Safety Through Informed Consumers Act (STICRS) Act in the FAST Act. Our provision gave the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) one year to integrate crash avoidance technology into their safety rating.

On December 8th of last year, the Department began the rulemaking process for incorporating crash avoidance technology into its 5-Star crash rating program. This update will help the consumers who are shopping for an automobile become aware of safety technologies that can prevent accidents. Additionally, I think it will incentivize additional innovation within the automotive industry.

Do you think the Administration will meet their one year deadline?

RESPONSE: In December 2015, the Department issued a notice requesting comments to planned changes to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) 5-Star Safety Ratings for new vehicles. Once this update of the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) is complete, NHTSA will then initiate a rulemaking to update the vehicle label to include the crash avoidance technology information as part of its new 5-Star Safety Ratings system. NHTSA is working hard to try to meet the one year deadline. If confirmed as Undersecretary, I would support efforts to help expedite implementation of these provisions. Like you, I believe strongly in the safety potential of crash avoidance technologies and recognize that consumers will benefit from increased information on the labels.

Low Volume Manufacturers Question:

The FAST Act included a provision that Senator Tester and I fought for that will ultimately allow small automakers to produce up to 325 replica cars a year. These classically styled cars look like they are at least 25 years old, such as the 1930s hot rods and 1960s Cobras – which will be manufactured under a regulatory framework that recognizes the unique challenges faced by small auto manufacturers.

The law outlines the program structure in detail and NHTSA has one year to issue any regulations necessary to implement it.

Is the agency on a timetable to issue final regulations by the end of the year? What can you tell me about the current work being done on this provision?

RESPONSE: NHTSA is actively engaged in implementing the low-volume manufacturer provision of the FAST Act. While the agency may not be able to complete a final rule by the deadline, NHTSA is working to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking as quickly as possible. If

confirmed as Undersecretary, I would support efforts to help expedite implementation of these provisions.