

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Full Committee
Nominations Hearing
Wednesday, July 16, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.

DEMOCRATIC QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Mr. Jonathan Morrison

COVER PAGE

SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL (D-WA)

Federal Workforce Staffing Cuts

In May, the DOT paused its planned reductions in force due to ongoing litigation. On July 8, the Supreme Court allowed the Administration to move forward with widespread firings. There is now uncertainty about what actions DOT plans to take. Meanwhile, 27.8 percent of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) employees have already left the agency through the deferred resignation program.

Question 1: Yes or No: Do you oppose a reduction-in-force at NHTSA, particularly when the agency has already lost over 27 percent of its workforce?

Answer: Since I'm not yet at the agency, I'm not aware of how NHTSA's staff is allocated amongst the various divisions, nor how workstreams are currently staffed.

Question 2: Are you concerned that widespread departures undermine NHTSA's ability to ensure public safety and pursue investigations?

Answer: Since I'm not yet at the agency, I'm not aware of how NHTSA's staff is allocated amongst the various divisions, nor how workstreams are currently staffed.

Stalled Safety Standards

Nearly 40,000 people die in traffic accidents every year, including 731 people who died in Washington State last year. The most common causes of traffic accidents are impaired and distracted driving, and speeding. NHTSA is responsible for setting and enforcing vehicle safety standards.

During your previous time at DOT, the agency did not issue a single new federal motor safety standard. Currently, there are 19 outstanding congressionally mandated vehicle safety requirements the agency has not completed. This includes automatic emergency braking for trucks, which could prevent 19,000 crashes annually, and lane keep assist, which could reduce crashes by 24 percent.

Question 1: What Congressionally mandated federal motor vehicle safety requirement rulemakings will you prioritize to decrease the number of fatal accidents on our roads, if confirmed?

Answer: Since I'm not yet at the agency, I'm not aware of how far staff has progressed in its various ongoing rulemakings. If confirmed, I would be briefed on the status of all outstanding rulemaking mandates.,.

Question 2: If confirmed, will you commit to completing congressionally mandated vehicle safety rulemakings in a timely manner?

Answer: If confirmed, I will exercise my leadership to ensure that all laws are faithfully executed and statutory mandates complied with.

Autonomous Vehicle Safety and AI Moratorium

Mr. Morrison, some of my colleagues have proposed prohibiting state and local governments from regulating AI. This would include prohibiting states from imposing safety and reporting requirements on autonomous vehicles.

Question 1: Does DOT have any requirements to ensure the safe operation of autonomous vehicles?

Answer: Pursuant to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act, manufacturers have the obligation to file a defect notice and commence the recall process within five days of having reason to believe that the vehicle or equipment has a defect in design, construction, or performance posing an unreasonable risk to safety. This applies to all vehicles, including AVs.

Question 2: If the federal government does not have any safety requirements, does it make sense to prohibit states from ensuring autonomous vehicles are safe to operate on public roads?

Answer: As described in response to Question 1, all vehicles, including autonomous vehicles, are subject to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act's broad defect authorities. I will defer to Congress on legislative efforts to restrict State regulation of Autonomous Vehicles.

Safe Systems Approach for Roadway Safety

Roadway fatality rates in the United States are 15 percent higher than they were a decade ago. Clearly, we need to fix the safety culture on our roads. Currently, three federal agencies work with three different agencies in each state to address their own aspects of roadway safety, often without any coordination.

We have learned from other industries, including the aviation industry, that looking at safety holistically and creating redundancy is essential to preventing mistakes that could lead to fatal accidents.

Question 1: Yes or No: Do you agree that a safe system approach is the best way to reduce roadway fatalities?

Answer: Yes—multi-prong approaches that provide for redundancy, such as a safe system approach, provide for a better and more comprehensive means to reduce fatality risks.

Question 2: How do you believe NHTSA can work with other modal administrations at the DOT to address safety holistically?

Answer: NHTSA can work with other modal administrations to address safety in several areas. This takes consistent collaboration on areas of adjacent or overlapping authority (e.g., the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration on trucking safety). If confirmed, I would look forward to working with the Secretary on ensuring that intermodal workstreams are aligned to achieve the most effective results.

Question 3: Yes or No: Do you support state and local efforts to implement comprehensive safety plans also known as “vision zero plans?”

Answer: Yes, if those plans are followed with concrete steps to address safety risks.

Suppressing Safety Data

Last year I sent a letter to DOT requesting documents related to allegations NHTSA suppressed safety data that showed side underride guards on truck trailers were cost beneficial. You were NHTSA's Chief Counsel at the time.

Question 1: While serving as NHTSA's Chief Counsel, did you allow any industry group to view, edit, or provide comment on a cost-benefit analysis or proposed research compiled by DOT's Volpe Center related to side underride guards?

Answer: No.

Question 2: Did you participate in a January 2020 meeting of DOT, NHTSA, and FMCSA officials related to the Volpe Center and side underride guards? If not, did any NHTSA attorneys in your office participate?

Answer: Yes.

Question 3: Did you participate in any meetings with members of the American Trucking Association related to the Volpe Center and side underride guards? If so, provide the dates, participants, and purpose of each meeting.

Answer: No.

Question 4: Do you think it's appropriate to allow industry groups to have special access to pre-decisional government reports that have a direct financial impact on them?

Answer: No.

Question 5: If confirmed, do you commit to full transparency at NHTSA regarding meetings with industry lobbyists on issues related to public safety?

Answer: If confirmed, I will follow the law.

Apple

Mr. Morrison, after working at NHTSA during the first Trump Administration, you worked in the Special Projects Group at Apple for the past four years. According to reports, during your tenure at Apple, the company spent billions of dollars developing a self-driving car, named "Project Titan." Little information is known about Project Titan, although some reports indicate Apple largely ended this effort last year.

Question 1: Mr. Morrison, please describe in detail your work on Project Titan or any other self-driving car project at Apple.

Answer: I am subject to non-disclosure requirements that do not allow me to discuss non-public work I performed at Apple.

Question 2: I understand you informed my staff during your interview on May 28, 2025, that you would not disclose the specifics of your work at Apple due to multiple non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). Is that still your position today?

Answer: Yes.

Question 3: Have you asked Apple to release you from these NDAs?

Answer: No.

Question 4: If a Member of this Committee directed you to ask Apple to release you from your NDAs, would you do so? If no, explain why not.

Answer: I will work with the Committee, if confirmed.

Question 5: Do you believe it is appropriate to conceal the work you did for a private company when it is directly relevant to the position for which you have been nominated?

Answer: If any matter arises that could have implications for Apple, I will consult with NHTSA's Designated Ethics Official prior to any engagement.

SENATOR ED MARKEY (D-MA)

Driver Automation

Almost every manufacturer of driver automation systems and partial driver automation systems restrict their systems only to the roads and driving conditions the systems are designed for. Manufacturers do this using a technology known as "geofencing." Tesla is an industry exception, allowing its Autopilot and Full-Self drive features to be enabled on any road and in any driving condition. During your hearing, you said regulation is appropriate when "a technology is fully understood and after an industry consensus has already been reached." Geofencing driving automation systems appears to meet both these criteria given its widespread adoption by industry with the exception of Tesla.

Question 1: Do you agree that NHTSA should require all driving automation systems, including partial driving automation systems like Autopilot, to be constrained to the specific roads and conditions they are designed for?

Answer: Level 3 and Level 4 automated driving systems are inherently limited to use within their operational design domain, and failure to include a fallback maneuver to achieve a minimal risk condition when an operational design domain is exceeded would present a safety risk subject to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act's defect requirements. With driver assistance systems, a human is driving under all circumstances and responsible for safe operation of the vehicle. The manufacturer of the system is expected to provide countermeasures to address reasonably foreseeable misuse, which may include a combination of geofencing, driver monitoring, and other technologies to provide assurance that the system is being used properly. Failure to include such countermeasures would present a safety risk subject to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act's defect requirements.

Truck Underrides

Q: During your hearing, you told Senator Lujan that you were not familiar with the truck underride side guard rulemaking. However, files released under the Freedom of Information Act show you were the direct recipient of emails regarding the publication of an FMCSA report on this topic. Records also show your direct reports were heavily involved in the report's revision and publication. The [report itself](#) was highly controversial due to investigative reporting at ProPublica.

Question 1: Now that you have had the chance to refamiliarize yourself with the issue, can you commit to ensuring the lives of my constituents – Minh-Thi Nguyen and Sidney Olson -- and all vulnerable road users are included in any cost-benefit analysis NHTSA conducts while reviewing this rule?

Answer: If confirmed, I would work with agency economists to ensure that all appropriate factors are considered as part of any benefit-cost analyses.

Distracted Driving

Research suggests distracted driving may be implicated in as many as 30% of all crashes. The *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* required NHTSA to conduct research on distracted driving and, if appropriate, propose rulemaking to prevent distracted driving. The research was mandated to be conducted within three years of enactment and is now long overdue.

Question 1: Can you commit to expeditiously completing this research and undertaking a rulemaking to mitigate distracted driving?

Answer: If confirmed, I will be briefed on the status of the research and provide resources to ensure the research is completed in a timely manner. Upon completion of the research, and based upon the findings of that research and other relevant information pursuant to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act, I will work with staff and the Secretary to determine whether a rulemaking is appropriate.

Seatback Safety

For decades, front seats in vehicles have endangered back seat riders' lives when they collapse and become projectiles during rear-end collisions. The *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* mandated NHTSA propose rulemaking to update the standards for seat back safety and protect back seat riders, many of whom are children. NHTSA announced a proposed rule in July 2024.

Question 1: Do you commit to expeditiously finalizing this long overdue rule and protecting the lives of children in back seats?

Answer: If confirmed, I will be briefed on the status of the rulemaking and will exercise my leadership to ensure that all laws are faithfully executed, and statutory mandates complied with.

Staffing Cuts

According to recent reporting by [Politico](#), 28 percent of NHTSA's employees took the Delayed Resignation Program offer.

Question 1: At an agency whose chief mission is safety, do you support these drastic cuts to NHTSA workforce?

Answer: If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that the agency has sufficient staffing to accomplish its mission, and look forward to working with NHTSA's fantastic team of safety professionals.

Question 2: What actions will you take to ensure NHTSA has the staff it needs to deliver on its safety mission?

Answer: Since I'm not yet at the agency, I'm not aware of how NHTSA's staff is allocated amongst the various divisions, nor how workstreams are currently staffed.

CAFE Standards

The reconciliation bill zeroed out penalties for automakers who violate the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards – unless the Department of Transportation explicitly notifies them of noncompliance.

Question 1: Will you commit to publishing a public list of violators, including who has received official noncompliance notices from the Department of Transportation?

Answer: If confirmed, I will follow the law.

Scientific Research

Question 1: Will you commit to ensuring that the findings of scientific research conducted by your agency will be communicated accurately, methodology will be transparent and available to those who wish to understand it, and that the scientists who generated the work will have an opportunity to correct any misrepresentations of their work prior to dissemination?

Answer: Transparency of research methodology and findings is critical to ensuring that NHTSA's research continues to set the gold standard in the vehicle and behavioral safety research fields, and I will ensure that the agency continues to be transparent in these areas.

Question 2: Do you pledge to use the best available scientific evidence to inform decisions and evidence-based policies, and to communicate clearly and accurately with the public regarding the evidence that informed these decisions and policies?

Answer: Yes.

SENATOR GARY PETERS (D-MI)

1. Over the course of Administrations under both parties, NHTSA has fallen behind on rulemakings in response to Congressional mandates. Studies have also found that it takes NHTSA over 5 years on average to complete a rulemaking.

- a. If confirmed, what is your plan to complete this rulemaking backlog and what steps do you think might be appropriate to improve NHTSA's operations?

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards are technical/engineering standards that must meet strict criteria in the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and notice-and-comment rulemaking requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act. Ensuring that standards are objective, practicable, meet the need for motor vehicle safety and grounded upon a sound scientific basis is critical both to ensuring legal sufficiency, cost-effectiveness and avoiding unintended adverse safety consequences. Ensuring the necessary scientific basis requires research. If appropriate and relevant research on a particular technology does not yet exist, NHTSA must carry out or sponsor that research itself, which takes time to plan and conduct. If confirmed, I will ensure that NHTSA's rulemaking resources are appropriately allocated to required rulemaking. Further, I understand that the Government Accountability Office recently issued recommendations to NHTSA on reducing the rulemaking timeline, with which the agency concurred. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that these recommendations are implemented where appropriate.

- b. Will you commit to providing timely and transparent updates to Congress on NHTSA's regulatory agenda and progress on specific rulemakings?

I will work toward delivering on NHTSA's regulatory agenda.

2. I have long been a champion of autonomous vehicle technology and believe that, if deployed correctly and responsibly, this technology can transform roadway safety.

- a. Will you commit to maintaining transparency and safety as guiding principles as you work to provide a regulatory framework for the deployment of autonomous vehicles on our roads?

Yes.

- b. What rulemakings do you think it would be appropriate for NHTSA to pursue related to autonomous vehicle testing and deployment?

I believe a combination of amending existing FMVSS to remove unnecessary and unintended barriers to designs enabled by automated driving systems and establishment of performance requirements for automated driving system competency will be necessary. In the meantime, NHTSA can issue guidance documents and best practices to help align industry toward appropriate and safe development, testing, and deployment of automated driving systems. Lastly, strong agency oversight and transparency are necessary to foster consumer trust.

- c. Will you commit to sharing updates with Congress, including my staff, on your progress related to an AV framework?

Yes, as appropriate.

- d. If confirmed, will you support maintaining NHTSA's Standing General Order on collecting crash data on autonomous and semi-autonomous systems?

Yes.

- 3. Vehicle-to-Everything technology, or "V2X", has demonstrated significant potential to reduce crashes, save lives, and improve traffic efficiency. However, the Department of Transportation's National Deployment Plan for V2X was recently taken down, creating uncertainty about the federal government's direction on this critical safety technology. Meanwhile, state and local governments are making considerable investments in V2X infrastructure to improve roadway safety and efficiency.
 - a. Are you willing to work collaboratively with public and private sector stakeholders to develop a voluntary framework for national V2X deployment?

V2X technologies provide great potential safety and efficiency benefits for next generation vehicles, other road users, and infrastructure. If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary to achieve his vision for efficient and effective V2X deployment to achieve positive safety outcomes.

- b. And will you ensure that NHTSA provides leadership and coordination to support these ongoing investments and maximize the safety and mobility benefits of V2X for all Americans?

If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary to achieve his vision for efficient and effective V2X deployment to achieve positive safety outcomes.

- 4. NHTSA's pending ANPRM on side underride guards estimated very few preventable deaths could be expected with a side underride guard requirement on tractor trailers, making the costs of regulation exceed benefits. This estimate reflected assumptions in the rulemaking's cost-benefit analysis that excluded whole categories of preventable deaths, the largest of which was vulnerable road users (pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists).
 - a. If confirmed, will you commit to considering vulnerable road users (pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists) in cost-benefit analyses to the furthest extent possible in rulemakings, including reconsidering its use in the above ANPRM?

If confirmed, I would work with agency economists to ensure that all appropriate factors are considered as part of any benefit-cost analyses.

- 5. As an avid Motorcyclist and Co-chair of the motorcycle caucus, I am strongly supportive of efforts to improve motorcycle safety given the disproportionate injuries and deaths experienced by motorcycle riders on our roads each year.
 - a. If confirmed, will you commit to working to improve motorcycle safety, including by continuing to carry out the Motorcycle Advisory Council Act, which was passed in 2021?

If confirmed, I commit to working to improve motorcycle safety and will follow the law—including the Motorcycle Advisory Council Act.

6. Mr. Morrison, it seems that NHTSA's bumper standards under Part 581 are overdue for an update, particularly since they restrict the placement of critical ADAS sensors used in Automatic Emergency Braking and other modern safety systems. If confirmed, will you look into modernize these standards to support new safety technologies?

If confirmed, I would look to evaluate regulations that may pose unnecessary barriers to safety innovation, including Part 581.

7. Thank you for answering my question on NHTSA's global leadership at the hearing. How important do you believe it is for NHTSA to prioritize harmonizing with global standards on rulemakings when possible?

Given the massive and expensive inefficiencies involved in developing different vehicles for different markets, harmonization is important to achieving cost savings that can make vehicles more affordable and quicken fleet turnover into safer and cleaner new vehicles. That said, NHTSA must meet the statutory requirements of the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and the Administrative Procedure Act in promulgating standards, and cannot merely adopt standards from other countries for the sake of harmonization. An important part of the agency's work is playing a leadership role in the UNECE World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations to create Global Technical Regulations for new technologies. This forum enables the United States to help ensure that new technical regulations are consistent with the tenets of the Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

Further, a critical part of the Motor Vehicle Safety Act is a requirement that standards be practicable—an important aspect of which includes affordability. Ensuring that new Federal Motor Vehicle Safety standards are compatible with regulations elsewhere can help minimize additional costly design, engineering, and testing efforts.

SENATOR BEN RAY LUJÁN (D-NM)

1. The Honoring the Abbas Family Legacy to Terminate Drunk Driving Act – also known as the HALT Act – is a bipartisan law enacted in 2021 as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This historic law requires all new vehicles to be equipped with advanced anti-drunk driving technology and, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), will save more than 10,000 lives a year when fully implemented. NHTSA's annual budget request to Congress states that implementing standards for advanced drunk and impaired driving technology will be an agency priority.

How will you prioritize dedicating the necessary time and resources to complete NHTSA's rulemaking on anti-drunk driving technology? Please provide exact details and a proposed timeline.

I'm not yet at the agency, so I don't yet have the information necessary to develop a detailed plan or timeline. That said, as mentioned in your office and during the hearing, getting briefed on the state of the DADSS technology and status of research and rulemaking progress will be a priority if I am confirmed.

2. Critics of the HALT Act have cited privacy concerns regarding advanced anti-drunk driving technology. However, the technology is meant to be a vehicle safety feature that simply prevents illegally drunk drivers from operating motor vehicles and putting others on the road at risk. It is NOT meant to put a police officer in your car or otherwise spy on drivers. Moreover, NHTSA is fully capable of building in privacy guardrails and protections in its final rule to safeguard consumer privacy. In fact, in its Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, NHTSA acknowledged that consumer privacy is critical toward establishing public acceptance of this technology.

Do you pledge as NHTSA Administrator to protect privacy and incorporate strong privacy principles in the final regulation implementing the HALT Act?

With any Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard, the rule must be practicable—which means not only technically feasible and affordable, but also acceptable to the driving public, since the federal government cannot force Americans to embrace new technologies through regulatory mandates. A technology that would threaten to expose sensitive information would likely face consumer resistance, and any rulemaking in this area should factor in privacy considerations.

3. NHTSA has a pending Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on side underride guards, with a cost benefit analysis that estimates that side underride guards will prevent very few deaths. As a result, according to NHTSA, the cost of installing side guards exceeds the benefits. Unfortunately, to reach this estimate, NHTSA makes assumptions in their cost benefit analysis that excludes whole categories of preventable deaths of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists. As shown in this video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTRZ1Pj9r7g>) side underride guards can prevent pedestrians and bicyclists from being crushed underneath, causing further injury and death in many circumstances.

Will you commit to counting pedestrians and bicyclists as preventable deaths for vulnerable road users in this cost benefit analysis and future rulemakings on side underride guards?

If confirmed, I would work with agency economists to ensure that all appropriate factors are considered as part of any benefit-cost analyses.

4. The Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety (DADSS) program is coming to an end in September 2025. At that time the reference design package will be handed over to the auto industry.

What will you do as NHTSA Administrator to work with auto industry leadership to ensure that this 17-year federal-funded program to develop anti-drunk driving tech in

collaboration with the auto industry will be ready to go in cars and available to consumers as soon as possible?

As discussed during our meeting and at the hearing, if confirmed, I will be briefed on the state of the DADSS program . One of the critical aspects of the DADSS program is that the intellectual property behind the technology must be made available to automakers and suppliers on a royalty-free basis. I believe this technology can have a massive safety impact and will encourage its early adoption.

5. 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. In 2024, nearly 70% of all vehicles sold in the U.S. had some form of automated driving system. Yet the NHTSA has no formal requirements for testing or certifying these vehicles. Additionally, NHTSA has recently relaxed its reporting requirements for autonomous vehicle (AV) crashes, eliminated a significant number of staff specifically focused on AV safety, and has drastically reduced the number of enforcement actions since the start of this administration. 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. Yet NHTSA is not only failing to enact mandatory standards to address the unique issues that arise with AVs, but they are loosening the reins.

(a) What do you plan to do to ensure Americans' trust in AVs is not misguided? How do you plan to enforce safety mechanisms in autonomous vehicles so we can all benefit from the promise of these technologies?

Critically important is differentiating between driver assistance systems and driving automation systems. Driver assistance systems—effectively all the systems available for consumer purchase—are effectively a sophisticated form of cruise control that require driver attention at all times during operation. Automakers are expected to have countermeasures in place to address reasonably expected misuse, but the person behind the wheel is the driver and responsible for safe operation of the vehicle. Consistent communication with automakers and drivers on these responsibilities is important to achieving appropriate design and operation.

With driving automation systems, however, the vehicle itself is responsible for the driving task, and with very few limited exceptions in a handful of highline vehicles, are limited to operator-controlled fleets in specific geographical areas. Setting development, testing, and performance expectations through guidance and best practices can help ensure that developers are acting appropriately. Being transparent with the public on what is being tested and the state of the technology can foster consumer trust.

Both driver assistance systems and driving automation systems are subject to the requirements of the vehicle safety act—including NHTSA's recall authority. If confirmed, I would not hesitate to use the full force of NHTSA's enforcement authorities to address bad actors in either space. This, too, can help ensure the trust in the American public.

(b) What do you see as the most significant safety challenges that are unique to autonomous vehicles?

While AVs provide incredible potential safety and mobility benefits, they present their own unique risks. First and foremost, development of an automated driving system is one of the greatest engineering challenges ever attempted. Ensuring that industry development and testing appropriately mitigates risk is critically important to achieving safe outcomes.

Automated driving systems involve sophisticated sensor suites and powerful computing systems that drive incredibly complicated software to fuse and translate sensor data into meaningful depictions of the physical world, classify objects and assign potential kinematic actions to those objects, and develop motion plans to navigate through roadways toward the destination—all constantly changing in real-time. Hardware or software insufficiencies or errors in any part of the system can lead to adverse safety outcomes. Industry best practices and standards for functional safety, safety of the intended functionality, software development, public road testing, and safety cases help developers track and mitigate risk.

6. You have agreed to recuse yourself from any matters in which Apple is a party for two years. However, because your non-disclosure agreements prevent you from disclosing your work there, we lack the visibility into what those matters might include.

How can we ensure your recusal is meaningful and effective if we do not have the relevant information?

During member and staff meetings, and in the resume and questionnaire I submitted to the Committee, I described the types of activities and general work I performed for Apple, but I am prohibited from describing specific technologies. That said, I am subject to criminal conflict-of-interest law, and have entered into a robust ethics agreement to ensure I do not engage in inappropriate activities. If any matter arises that could have implications for Apple, I would consult with NHTSA's Designated Ethics Official prior to any engagement on the matter.

SENATOR JOHN HICKENLOOPER (D-CO)

Autonomous Vehicles

Despite past Congressional efforts to establish such, there are currently no comprehensive federal statutes or regulations that specifically apply to the testing or operational deployment of fully autonomous vehicles (AVs). Today, many states—including Colorado—have passed their own laws establishing strict requirements for testing and deploying autonomous vehicles. AVs can be a transformative technology only if targeted and rigorous safety regulations are in place.

To maintain robust safety standards and promote the adoption in AVs, what specific lessons do you believe the federal government could learn from the enacted state laws in effect today?

While State laws provide for permitting or registration, and sometimes reporting, I am not aware of State regulations that create the sort of technical performance requirements and test procedures that would be appropriate under the Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

Which examples of AV safety testing or AV deployment from state AV laws do you believe are achievable within NHTSA's existing statutory authorities, and which do you believe would require new authorization from Congress for NHTSA to execute?

While State laws provide for permitting or registration, and sometimes reporting, I am not aware of State regulations that create the sort of technical performance requirements and test procedures that would be appropriate under the Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

Vehicle Communications Infrastructure

Vehicle-to-Everything technology, or "V2X", has demonstrated significant potential to reduce crashes, save lives, and improve traffic efficiency. However, the Department of Transportation's National Deployment Plan for V2X was recently taken down, creating uncertainty about the federal government's direction on this critical safety technology. Meanwhile, state and local governments are making considerable investments in V2X infrastructure to improve roadway safety and efficiency.

Are you willing to work with public and private sector stakeholders to develop a robust voluntary framework for national V2X deployment?

V2X technologies provide great potential safety and efficiency benefits for next generation vehicles, other road users, and infrastructure. If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary to achieve his vision for efficient and effective V2X deployment to achieve positive safety outcomes.

Will you ensure that NHTSA provides coordination to support these ongoing investments and maximize the safety and mobility benefits of V2X technology?

If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary to achieve his vision for efficient and effective V2X deployment to achieve positive safety outcomes.

Automatic Emergency Braking

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) required DOT to issue a final rule to require Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB) on all newly manufactured large trucks by November 2023. DOT estimates this technology will save over a hundred lives, prevent thousands of injuries, and tens of thousands of crashes involving large trucks annually. This critical standard is nearly 2 years overdue.

What steps will you commit to taking to expedite the completion of the final AEB rule? When is your target date to issue the final rule?

If confirmed, I will be briefed on the status of this rulemaking and any research necessary to provide the foundation necessary for rulemaking. I would also ensure that staff continues to work on the rulemaking. Without such information, I'm unable to provide a target date.

SENATOR BLUNT ROCHESTER (D-DE)

NHTSA Overdue Rules

Question 1: Since Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and allocated more resources to NHTSA four years ago, the agency has now more than doubled its pace of rulemaking on critical safety issues. We still need to do better, but this represents progress.

Do you agree that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was effective in easing NHTSA's rulemaking backlog?

Answer:

I have not worked with the agency since the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was passed, and don't have information that would allow me to meaningfully weigh in on this question, but the agency was able to complete a number of rulemakings after passage of the law.

Question 2: Do you support the funding for staff resources and capacity for NHTSA in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law?

Answer:

The resources from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided a significant plus up for vehicle and behavioral safety research. If confirmed, I will ensure the agency delivers on its mission.

Question 3: Will you commit to maintaining NHTSA's workforce that has proven so critical for safety?

Answer:

Since I'm not yet at the agency, I'm not aware of how NHTSA's staff is allocated amongst the various divisions, nor how workstreams are currently staffed. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that the agency has sufficient staffing to accomplish its mission.

NHTSA Hot Cars

Question 1: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law directed NHTSA to issue rulemaking on child safety requiring cars to have a rear seat detector to help prevent children from dying in overheated vehicles.

Will you commit to advancing this rule if confirmed?

Answer:

If confirmed, I will be briefed on the status of this rulemaking and any research necessary to provide a foundation necessary for rulemaking. I would also ensure that staff continues to work on the rulemaking.