



February 25, 2026

DOT/NHTSA
Dr. Cem Hatipoglu
Associate Administrator, Vehicle Safety Research
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20590
[Docket No. NHTSA–2025–0325]

Dear Dr. Hatipoglu:

The Alliance for Automotive Innovation (“Auto Innovators”)¹ appreciates the opportunity to submit comments to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) regarding its Fall 2025 Safety Research Portfolio Public Meeting.² Auto Innovators commends NHTSA for its continued commitment to collaboration and transparency as reflected in the breadth and depth of the research updates presented.

NHTSA’s robust research program plays a critical role in underpinning thoughtful, evidence-based policies. Data-driven approaches are essential to the development of effective safety programs, guidelines, requirements, and standards. Events such as this briefing provide valuable opportunities for the public and industry to gain valuable insight into NHTSA’s research progress as well as its strategic direction and longer-term priorities. Clear visibility into the agency’s focus areas and findings enables automakers and other stakeholders to better align their own research and development efforts.

The Automated Driving Systems (ADS) Workshop was an especially effective mechanism for fostering open, substantive dialogue in support of the Administration’s work on automated driving. The format encouraged meaningful and candid cross-disciplinary discussion among a diverse set of perspectives and participants. The recent announcement of a follow-up meeting on March 10, 2026, affirms the agency’s commitment to ongoing conversations with the public in this important area of automotive innovation.³ Auto Innovators appreciates NHTSA’s continued willingness to

¹ Auto Innovators represents the full auto industry, including the manufacturers producing most vehicles sold in the U.S., equipment suppliers, battery producers, semiconductor makers, technology companies, and autonomous vehicle developers. Our mission is to work with policymakers to realize a cleaner, safer, and smarter transportation future and to ensure a healthy and competitive auto industry that supports U.S. economic and national security. Representing over 5 percent of the country’s GDP, responsible for supporting nearly 11 million jobs, and driving \$1.5 trillion in annual economic activity, the automotive industry is the nation’s largest manufacturing sector.

² <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/09/19/2025-18220/nhtsa-safety-research-portfolio-public-meeting-fall-2025-and-public-workshop-on-automated-driving>

³ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/02/09/2026-02503/nhtsa-automated-vehicle-safety-public-meeting-march-2026>



thoughtfully engage with stakeholders as these complex technical, regulatory, and policy issues keep evolving.

Auto Innovators strongly encourages NHTSA to continue identifying opportunities to strengthen structured engagement with stakeholders. By consistently providing forums for external dialogue, NHTSA can enhance the effectiveness of its research programs, improve outcomes, and help build broader consensus around critical initiatives across the automotive safety ecosystem.

Auto Innovators also encourages NHTSA to articulate an explicit research-to-rulemaking priority plan that more directly links its research agenda with anticipated regulatory and programmatic actions.⁴ While NHTSA conducts extensive and high-quality research, greater transparency regarding how specific research efforts are intended to inform future rulemakings, guidance, or program updates – and the sequencing of those activities – would improve regulatory efficiency. A clearer prioritization framework would help ensure that limited agency and stakeholder resources are focused on research that is most critical to near-term safety outcomes, while reducing the risk that regulatory requirements outpace or diverge from the best available technical evidence. In addition, NHTSA should always consider how to best coordinate research and rulemaking efforts with ongoing updates to its New Car Assessment Program (NCAP).⁵ Such an approach is particularly valuable for emerging technologies, including ADS.

Auto Innovators again commends NHTSA for its dedication to advancing vehicle safety through robust research and evidence-based policymaking. Regular and transparent communication on the status of that research through activities like the Safety Research Portfolio Public Meeting are essential to fostering the innovation necessary to create a safer transportation future for all road users. We look forward to continued engagement with NHTSA and the Office of Vehicle Safety Research in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SP", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Sarah Puro

Vice President, Safety and Technology Policy
Alliance for Automotive Innovation

⁴ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/DOT-OST-2025-0468-2690>

⁵ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/DOT-OST-2025-0468-2690>