

September 20, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We appreciate and share your interest in the safe deployment of automated vehicles (AVs) in the United States and urge you to continue and expand the Department's efforts to help achieve that goal. Among other benefits, AVs present an unprecedented opportunity to promote and advance transportation safety, increase access to mobility for underserved communities, and improve the efficiency of freight movement and the U.S. logistics system. Implementing a federal AV framework that fosters the safe deployment of AVs can help the Biden Administration to shepherd in a safer, more environmentally friendly, and accessible transportation future.

AV technology is also vital to maintaining competitiveness in vehicle and mobility technologies, continuing to support the ten million Americans working in the vehicle and vehicle component manufacturing industry, and growing the economy. As you told Congress at your confirmation hearing, U.S. policy has not kept pace with technology development. Other countries are racing ahead to capture this new industry, set its standards, and become the home of AV development and manufacturing.

The Department and key stakeholders throughout the transportation ecosystem have recently worked to identify regulatory barriers to the deployment of AVs in the U.S. These efforts to mitigate or remove such barriers, including regulatory items already underway, should continue and, to the extent possible, be accelerated.¹ Additionally, the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on a Framework for Automated Driving System Safety sparked a significant and necessary conversation about any new regulations that should govern this technology into the future. We were pleased to provide comments in this proceeding and look forward to working with you and others in the Department on next steps to establish a federal safety framework for AVs.

Currently, there is much uncertainty as to how the Department intends to regulate AV technology in the near term as updates to existing motor vehicle safety standards are developed and finalized. As the AV industry moves from research and development to deployment, we urge the Department to use its authority to foster a pathway for near-term AV deployment. Providing for the widest range of deployment options in the near term will also help the Department gather key data on the performance of AVs to inform permanent safety standards that are both practicable and effective.

We share your goals of improving the quality of life for all American people and communities and increasing the productivity and competitiveness of American workers and businesses. We firmly believe that AVs will play a fundamental role in achieving these goals. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you or key members of your leadership team to discuss the Department's role in facilitating the safe and responsible deployment of AVs in the U.S.

Sincerely,

¹ This includes, for example, finalizing and publishing the Occupant Protection Final Rule.

