



MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

July 25, 2018

The Honorable John Thune, Chairman
Commerce, Science and Transportation
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson, Ranking Member
Commerce, Science and Transportation
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

As the Chiefs and Sheriffs for the Nation's metropolitan areas, we are the agencies that respond to traffic accidents every day. Nobody knows better the traffic and automobile threat to public safety. For this reason, we are compelled to speak out on S.1885, the AV START Act.

While we respect the hard work of Senators and their staff to strengthen this bill, it simply does not go far enough to safeguard the public. Recent AV accidents and deaths warrant intense scrutiny and immediate action to protect the public from further tragedies, not exemptions for industry. To encourage rapid development of this technology before safety regulations are in place is not an approach that we can endorse. Deployment should be conditioned on safety reports and not permitted in spite of public safety.

The Committee report notes that it will be years until Federal Regulations are in place. To this end, we would strongly encourage amendments to allow normal and traditional State and local roles until the U.S. Department of Transportation is in a position to promulgate effective regulations. During the interim, there should be detailed analysis of the lessons learned from failures so that industry does not rapidly deploy flawed vehicles which threaten public safety.

Language that prohibits the Department of Transportation from restricting deployment prior to safety studies and exempts industry from current safety restrictions represents a dangerous step backward and is not in the interest of the public we are sworn to protect.

Sincerely,

J. Thomas Manger
Chief of Police
Montgomery County Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association

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