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March 19, 2026

The Honorable Sean P. Duffy
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

I write to applaud the Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for the Administration's recent efforts to advance the safe deployment of autonomous vehicles (AV) in the United States. Most recently, at NHTSA's March 10th National AV Safety Forum, Administrator Morrison highlighted the safety benefits of AVs, emphasized the need for a single federal vehicle safety standard, and announced plans for updated AV guidance later this year.¹ This forum builds on the Administration's broader record of AV leadership. It follows the AV Framework unveiled last spring, the streamlining of the Part 555 exemption process, and the issuance of the first-ever demonstration exemption for American-made AVs.²

Safety is at the core of this transformative technology. Nearly 40,000 Americans die on our roads each year, and 94% of serious crashes are linked to human error.³ AVs can drastically reduce fatalities caused by distraction, impairment, and fatigue, but to realize that promise, we need clear national rules that prioritize safety and enable responsible deployment. These systems are safe, and we have the data to prove it. Waymo reports over 127 million autonomous miles and substantially lower rates of injury-causing crashes than human drivers, including 85 percent fewer serious injury crashes and 92 percent fewer pedestrian injury crashes.⁴

¹ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/speeches-presentations/national-av-safety-forum> ; <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/driving-news-trumps-transportation-secretary-sean-p-duffy-hosts-first-ever-national>

² <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/trumps-transportation-secretary-sean-p-duffy-unveils-new-automated-vehicle-framework> ; ; <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/nhtsa-issues-first-ever-demonstration-exemption-american-built-automated-vehicles> <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-transportation-secretary-sean-p-duffy-streamlines-exemption-process-noncompliant> ; <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/nhtsa-issues-first-ever-demonstration-exemption-american-built-automated-vehicles>

³ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/nhtsa-2023-traffic-fatalities-2024-estimates> ; https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/documents/12837-workshop_on_governance_of_automated_vehicles_03062017_final_version-tag.pdf

⁴ <https://waymo.com/safety/impact/>

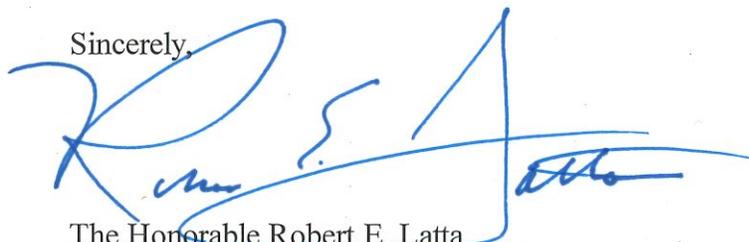
The forum also reinforced the need for one federal AV framework. More than 35 states have enacted AV laws, resulting in a patchwork that slows deployment and makes it harder for American companies to invest with confidence.⁵ The federal government has always overseen the design, construction, and performance of vehicles, and should continue to do so for AVs. As Administrator Morrison argued, “We want to ensure that as AVs cross state lines, the rules remain clear.”⁶

When unveiling the Administration’s AV Framework, you warned that “we’re in a race with China to out-innovate, and the stakes couldn’t be higher.”⁷ The United States cannot afford to lose this race. Baidu has already completed over 17 million rides, and Beijing has mandatory AV standards that take effect this year.⁸ If America fails to deliver clear national rules, China will scale its technology, influence global standards, and steal manufacturing jobs that should have remained in America.

The AV Safety Forum made clear that the Administration understands the stakes. I appreciate the continued AV leadership NHTSA, the Department, and the Administration have shown. Congress should build on this progress with durable statutory clarity that prioritize safety, a federal standard, and American competitiveness. I look forward to working with you and Administrator Morrison as we advance a responsible federal AV framework.

Thank you for your continued engagement on this issue.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Robert E. Latta

Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Jonathan Morrison, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

⁵ <https://www.ncsl.org/transportation/autonomous-vehicles> ; <https://www.ncsl.org/transportation/autonomous-vehicles-legislation-database>

⁶ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/speeches-presentations/national-av-safety-forum>

⁷ <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/trumps-transportation-secretary-sean-p-duffy-unveils-new-automated-vehicle-framework>

⁸ <https://investor.uber.com/news-events/news/press-release-details/2026/Baidu-and-Uber-Partner-to-Bring-Apollo-Go-Autonomous-Ride-hailing-to-Dubai-in-Collaboration-with-Dubais-Roads-and-Transport-Authority/default.aspx> ; <https://carnewschina.com/2026/02/26/new-chinese-regulations-push-l3-autonomous-vehicles-closer-to-l4-capabilities-with-enhanced-safety-protocols>