

June 17, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The undersigned associations, representing the manufacturing, automotive, agricultural, retail, freight transportation, and logistics industries across all 50 states, write regarding the inclusion of critical safety priorities in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization. The expiration of federal transportation program authorizations on September 30th would have negative consequences for our industries. We support a surface transportation reauthorization bill with robust funding so that our members can continue to efficiently make and move products, including highways, bridges, rail, ports, aviation, transit, water infrastructure, as well as critical transportation safety policies. Our member companies have driven one of the most significant periods of transportation safety advancement in modern history. As Congress considers future transportation safety policy, lawmakers should build on this progress by incorporating our organization's priorities that will advance performance-based approaches that preserve flexibility, avoid unnecessarily burdensome mandates, and allow manufacturers to continue driving the next generation of transportation safety innovation.

Over the years, our industries have led safety innovations across transportation modes, and manufacturers are committed to continuing to innovate in order to further protect and deliver for American communities:

- Across America's highway system, modern vehicles now incorporate advanced driver assistance technologies such as automatic emergency braking, lane departure warning systems, adaptive cruise control, blind spot monitoring, and collision mitigation systems—many of which were rapidly developed and scaled by manufacturers and now save thousands of lives on U.S. roadways each year.
- Manufacturers have also driven major advances in connected vehicle technologies, telematics, predictive maintenance systems, and onboard diagnostics that allow original equipment manufacturers, operators, and public agencies to work together to identify risks proactively, improve maintenance practices, and reduce the likelihood of crashes and equipment failures.
- In freight rail, manufacturers have advanced stronger tank car standards, improved braking technologies, automated inspection systems, track and equipment monitoring tools, positive train control implementation support, and next-generation materials engineered to withstand greater stress and improve system resilience.

- Manufacturers have also played a central role in improving aviation safety and reliability through the development of more durable aircraft materials, next-generation navigation systems, predictive maintenance technologies, improved engine performance systems, and advanced manufacturing techniques that strengthen operational safety across the aviation sector.

These examples represent only a portion of the significant advances manufacturers have made in transportation safety through sustained innovation, investment, and collaboration with industry partners and policymakers. As Congress considers future transportation safety legislation, lawmakers must preserve the flexibility that allows manufacturers to continue developing and operationalizing next-generation safety technologies. Performance-based approaches that prioritize measurable outcomes—rather than overly prescriptive mandates—create the space necessary for continued innovation, operational adaptability, and long-term safety improvements.

Manufacturers remain deeply committed to improving safety across every mode of transportation. As Congress continues its work crafting the safety provisions of the surface transportation reauthorization bill, our organizations strongly support a forward-looking policy framework that builds on the progress our members have led. By encouraging innovation, supporting performance-based standards, and creating space for continued technological advancement, Congress has the opportunity to enhance safety without imposing inflexible prescriptive mandates—empowering industry to strengthen both safety and the resilience of our nation’s transportation network.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued work to pass a robust surface transportation bill this year.

Respectfully,

National Association of Manufacturers
Alliance for Automotive Innovation
American Forest & Paper Association
American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association
American Trucking Associations
Association of American Railroads
Beer Institute
Intermodal Association of North America
National Grain and Feed Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Retail Federation
North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers
Railway Supply Institute
Retail Industry Leaders Association
The Fertilizer Institute
The Railway Engineering-Maintenance Suppliers Association, Inc.
Truckload Carriers Association