

**STATEMENT OF
Joan Claybrook
Former Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
Board Member, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates)
at Press Conference on NHTSA's Data Release on Crashes Involving Vehicles Equipped
with Partial or Fully Automated Driving Technology**

Good afternoon. I am Joan Claybrook. I am a former Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) appointed by President Jimmy Carter and a founding board member of Advocates. I am honored to join Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Edward Markey (D-MA), Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Advocates, and the League of American Bicyclists to discuss the critically important information released today by NHTSA. The data regarding the performance and mishaps of cars already equipped with advanced technologies as well as data regarding autonomous vehicles is troubling. I commend NHTSA Administrator Dr. Steven Cliff and his staff for their diligence and determination to collect and share this vital information.

When I served as Administrator, data were the driving force behind agency safety decisions. Today's release of data shows that vehicle system failures are putting everyone on our neighborhood streets and roads at risk. This is especially so in California which is one of the biggest public "laboratories." California taxpayers are footing the bill for this experiment in costs generated by first responders, emergency rooms, infrastructure damage, congestion, and most devastatingly, with their safety and their lives.

Families walking into an auto dealer showroom shopping for a new car expect that the federal government has done its job to ensure their safety. Historically, consumer confidence in the performance of features like seat belts, airbags and most recently, rearview cameras, has been achieved because of minimum performance standards set by NHTSA. This is not the case with advanced driver assistance systems like automatic emergency braking, referred to as AEB. Research shows that AEB is a highly effective lifesaving feature in a car or truck if built and functioning properly. That is, when a crash is imminent, a warning is given followed by braking if a distracted, drowsy or impaired driver doesn't respond.

AEB and other proven crash avoidance technologies are at hand, but not yet required as standard equipment on new vehicles. This must change. NHTSA must issue new standards to ensure these lifesaving systems are available on every new car, affordable for every family and perform properly every time.

Often, automakers have promoted the use of industry voluntary agreements or non-binding frameworks as a substitute for government standards. These agreements have been failures for safety and for consumers. They allow inferior products and require consumers to often pay exorbitant costs for essential safety technologies. The data released today confirm that we

cannot trust all auto manufacturers to voluntarily achieve the highest possible level of safety without government requirements.

This new NHTSA data also expose the danger of industry efforts to pass legislation in Congress to sell self-driving vehicles before they are required to be safe and secure. We are all stakeholders in the development and deployment of self-driving cars -- those inside the vehicle and those outside. And we are all at risk if faulty and dangerous self-driving technology is on the road without meeting minimum government safety requirements.

DOT does not need Congress to direct it to issue safety standards for self-driving cars. The agency already has this statutory authority. DOT should act now to develop standards to ensure the safety of today's advanced driving assistance systems and for self-driving cars of the future.

Thank you again to Dr. Steven Cliff and his NHTSA team. We look forward to continuing to work with them to bring down the skyrocketing motor vehicle crash fatalities with proven solutions.

###