

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 6, 2023

The Honorable Ann Carlson
Acting Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Acting Administrator Carlson,

We write to request additional information from the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration on its efforts to implement provisions passed in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to prevent distracted driving.

Distracted driving has become among the most significant factors contributing to traffic deaths. In the past decade, traffic deaths increased over 25 percent.¹ A study published earlier this year by NHTSA found that distraction was a factor in 29 percent of all motor vehicle crashes in 2019, resulting in 10,546 fatalities. Moreover, distracted driving contributed to 1.3 million nonfatal injuries, costing the economy \$98.2 billion.²

Given the impact of distracted driving on safety and the economy, Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which included the *SAFE to DRIVE Act* to ensure more states can enforce distracted driving laws, educate drivers, and keep our roads safe. Congress also granted NHTSA new regulatory authorities based on the *Stay Aware for Everyone (SAFE) Act* to prevent distracted driving. Specifically, the law directs NHTSA to study driver monitoring systems that minimize driver distraction and disengagement, and, if warranted based on the results of the study, require a rulemaking. The law also directs NHTSA to issue minimum performance standards for crash avoidance technologies and to require that all cars be equipped with a forward collision warning system, an automatic emergency braking system, a lane departure warning system, and a lane keeping system.

We recognize the work NHTSA has done to ensure the safety of our nation's roads. We request an update on your implementation of these provisions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, as well as an update about your other activities to end distracted driving. Please respond by November 21, 2023 with answers to the following questions:

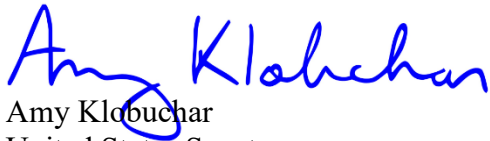
¹ National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2023, April). Early estimate of motor vehicle traffic fatalities in 2022 (Crash•Stats Brief Statistical Summary. Report No. DOT HS 813 428). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813428>

² Blincoc, L., Miller, T., Wang, J.-S., Swedler, D., Coughlin, T., Lawrence, B., Guo, F., Klauer, S., & Dingus, T. (2023, February). The economic and societal impact of motor vehicle crashes, 2019 (Revised) (Report No. DOT HS 813 403). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>


1. When does NHTSA expect to finalize research— and subsequent final rules for driver monitoring systems— required under Section 24209 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law?
2. How has NHTSA implemented the new grant opportunity for states that ban distracted driving?
3. How is NHTSA measuring the effectiveness of state distracted driving law enforcement activities conducted with grants awarded under Section 405(e)?
4. What other activities or rulemakings is NHTSA undertaking to prevent distracted driving?
5. Does NHTSA need any additional resources to prevent distracted driving?

We appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator