



January 9, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to you pursuant to Section 24401 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. This provision requires the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to publish on its website and file an annual plan for the following calendar year with the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The legislation requires that NHTSA provide you with information on our plans related to priorities, rulemaking, issuance of guidelines, organizational restructuring, and working groups. I am pleased to provide an update on NHTSA's anticipated 2018 activities.

### **Priorities**

NHTSA's mission and main priority is the safety of all road users. To achieve that, we aim to make vehicles safer, to foster innovation and improvements in the safety of the future fleet, and to engage the public on making the right choices that will help them travel safely.

To make vehicles safer, NHTSA remains committed to improving its recall management processes. NHTSA continues to improve early warning reporting and data mining abilities, while aligning staff resources to identify and remedy issues as early as possible. Additionally, we will use our media platforms to continue to raise public awareness about the importance of knowing if a vehicle is under recall, and if so, emphasizing the importance of getting it fixed.

In addition to the successful programs related to the existing vehicle fleet, we are committed to the safe development and future deployment of automated driving systems (ADS). The ADS technology could revolutionize roadway safety by preventing crashes from occurring. NHTSA will facilitate stakeholder discussions surrounding ADS, and continue to research safety performance measures and tests for these systems.

As promising as ADS and other advanced technologies are, we will continue to actively improve and advance safety here and now. NHTSA will promote proven countermeasures that aim to eliminate impaired driving and improve the safety of road users inside and outside of vehicles, both through State grant programs and targeted partnerships with stakeholders such as law

enforcement. For those crashes that are not prevented, NHTSA will continue efforts to strengthen America's 911 system and Emergency Medical Systems so more people can receive the lifesaving help that they need to survive their crash-related injuries.

Details on NHTSA's annual activities are discussed in the annual budget request. The budget request will support NHTSA's safety mission through continuation of ongoing programs and safety efforts while also ensuring that the agency keeps pace with innovations and rapidly emerging roadway trends like automated driving systems and driver distraction. Strategic investments in biomechanics, crash avoidance, and vehicle safety systems will further support the agency's research. The current request, as submitted to the Committee on Appropriations, can be found at: [https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/fy2018-nhtsa\\_cj-05162017-final.pdf](https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/fy2018-nhtsa_cj-05162017-final.pdf).

### **Rulemaking**

NHTSA's regulatory priorities for 2018 include coordinating efforts on the development of automated vehicles and reducing regulatory barriers to technology innovation. NHTSA also plans to issue several rulemakings and other actions that increase safety and reduce economic burden, including some in response to statutory mandates. Most prominently, NHTSA will explore the barriers in existing regulation to deployment of automated vehicles, particularly those that affect vehicles that may have innovative designs. In addition, working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NHTSA plans to propose fuel efficiency standards for light vehicle model years 2022 through 2025. More information about these rules can be found in the U.S. Department of Transportation Unified Agenda, available at: <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaMain>. This information is updated each spring and fall.

### **Guidelines**

In the pursuit of saving lives and reducing injuries on the Nation's roadways, NHTSA is committed to using all available tools. NHTSA, like other agencies, issues guidelines on many issues after careful research and collaboration. NHTSA routinely publishes Highway Safety Guidelines on several topics to assist State and local governments in managing their road safety programs. Updates to the Highway Safety Guidelines for Distracted and Drowsy Driving and Impaired Driving are anticipated in the year ahead. Newly-developed Human Factors Design Guidance for automated driving concepts are also expected. Additionally, NHTSA plans to develop guidelines for Cybersecurity Response Plans.

### **Organizational Restructuring and Working Groups**

While the Department is exploring the viability of shared services for certain administrative functions, NHTSA does not anticipate changes to its operating structure in 2018. Further, we do not anticipate creating or changing any working groups.

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Similar letters have been sent to the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce; the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; and to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Sincerely yours,

Heidi R. King  
Deputy Administrator

