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Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

Bill Shuster
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member

Christopher P. Bertram, Staff Director

July 20, 2016

Katherine W. Dedrick, Democratic Staff Director

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Secretary Foxx and Chairman Wheeler:

I strongly urge both the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to align Administration priorities before establishing rules for the 5.9 GHz wireless spectrum and the use of Dedicated Short Range Communications (DSRC) in connected vehicles. I urge you to avoid making decisions with a short-term, narrow viewpoint and instead do what is in the greater public interest.

The promises of DSRC include fewer motor vehicle fatalities, less traffic congestion and the resulting reduction in air pollution, and greater mobility. While I understand the desire for more unlicensed WiFi spectrum, the desire for better Pokémon Go play cannot be compared to the 35,000 motor vehicle deaths every year.

In 2015 an estimated 35,200 people were killed in motor vehicle accidents, a 7.7 percent increase in motor vehicle traffic deaths which reverses a decades long decline. Of these crashes, 94 percent can be tied back to a human choice or error. DSRC connected vehicles would likely save many of these lives. There is no other public interest need for this spectrum that rises to this level of importance.

Traffic congestion management opportunities offered by DSRC are of critical importance to urban areas. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute's 2015 Urban Mobility report found that congestion costs commuters \$160 billion in wasted time and fuel. That is the result of 3.1 billion gallons of fuel wasted and 6.9 billion additional hours of travel time through delays. This costs the average commuter \$960 per year. In areas with populations of more than 1 million the cost jumps to

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an extra \$1,440 per commuter. States and local governments could significantly reduce this congestion with the help of DSRC connected vehicles.

A recent petition before the FCC calls for a delay in DSRC mandates until cybersecurity and privacy protections are implemented. While I agree with the petitioners on the need for cybersecurity and privacy protections, I do not believe a delay in DSRC is in the public interest. Given that the average age of vehicles is 11 years, this technology will take decades to penetrate the fleet of vehicles nationwide. Any delay in the mandate means lives unnecessarily lost. It also means that we have time to get the cybersecurity and privacy protections in place before broad DSRC deployment.

Many interested parties view the debate over the 5.9 GHz spectrum as a battle between commercial interests. Motor vehicle safety and congestion mitigation are not commercial interests. I urge the FCC and DOT to not place any commercial interests above motor vehicle safety and congestion mitigation. States and local and governments need this tool to maximize the efficiency of their transportation network, make dramatic strides in safety, and reduce congestion and air pollution.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to your continued partnership on promoting safety on our roads.

Sincerely,



PETER DeFAZIO
Ranking Member