



901

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

Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

Sam Graves, MO
Ranking Member

December 4, 2019

Katherine W. Dedrick, Staff Director

Paul J. Sass, Republican Staff Director

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Michael O’Rielly
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Brendan Carr
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Geoffrey Starks
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Chairman Pai and Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel, and Starks:

As Ranking Members of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, we are aware that increased demand for spectrum resources challenges the Federal government to work harder to find ways to utilize limited spectrum effectively and efficiently. We remain dedicated to making spectrum available for private sector deployment; however, current transportation safety technologies are being deployed across the 5.9 GHz radiofrequency band.

In 1999, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) allocated the 5.9 GHz radiofrequency band to dedicated short-range communications (DSRC) for use with intelligent transportation systems (ITS). DSRC enables communication both between vehicles (V2V) and with the surrounding environment (V2X). Further deployment of V2X technologies is critical to reducing highway fatalities and saving lives. Every year, hazards or driver error lead to more than six million crashes that cause over 36,000 deaths and over 2 million injuries, and lead to \$240 billion in economic costs.¹

¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, “Traffic Safety Facts 2017: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data.”

According to the most recent available information of planned and operational V2X deployments from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), there are 97 deployments of V2X communications utilizing the 5.9 GHz band, 18,877 vehicles with aftermarket V2X communications devices, and 8,098 infrastructure V2X devices installed at the roadside.² Furthermore, all seven channels in the 5.9 GHz band are actively utilized in these deployments. V2X deployments are already supporting platforms related to warnings against red-light violations, reduced speed and work zone areas, and location-specific weather impacts. Moreover, the Signal Phase and Timing Challenge, a program created out of a partnership between the Federal government and industry stakeholders, is pushing States to develop at least one connected corridor or intersection network in each State by 2020. So, while the FCC may be concerned with the slow pace of development and deployment, it makes little sense to upend the progress being made and send a signal to the private sector that this band may not be available in the future.

In 2015, Congress affirmed its commitment to seeing more widespread deployment of intelligent transportation systems through the creation of an Advanced Transportation Technologies Deployment program and expanded eligibility of these systems for federal investment. As Ranking Members, we have made the adoption of technology in our transportation system a key priority and expect to take further steps in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization to encourage greater use of ITS throughout our system. Taking away this dedicated spectrum would be counter to our national transportation policy goals, as affirmed by the DOT and the Congress with the passage of the FAST Act (P.L. 114-94) in 2015.

States and localities across the Nation are using the 5.9 GHz band for traffic safety today. On June 3, 2019, various State Departments of Transportation, representatives from the auto industry, and other users gathered at DOT's public conference titled, "Traffic Safety and the 5.9 GHz Band" to describe technologies for traffic safety and congestion mitigation. Utilization of this spectrum as intended advances safety, system efficiency, and greater mobility for the movement of freight and passengers. Additionally, on December 4, 2019, a broad coalition of transportation safety stakeholders have signed a letter highlighting the need to keep the 5.9 GHz band for transportation uses.

Beyond the DSRC-based deployments, private sector companies are currently researching and testing Cellular-V2X (C-V2X) technology that also would utilize the 5.9 GHz spectrum. This next generation of cellular communications will allow for enhanced V2X services, particularly for vehicle platooning, advanced driving, extended sensors, and remote driving.

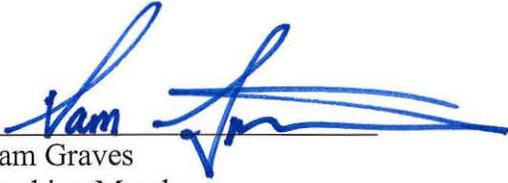
We are pleased to see DOT affirm its commitment working to preserve the ability for transportation safety applications to function in the 5.9 GHz spectrum while also remaining technology-neutral through its *Preparing for the Future of Transportation: Automated Vehicle 3.0* (AV 3.0) released on October 4, 2018. In AV 3.0, DOT notes that it is "continuing its work to preserve the ability for transportation safety applications to function in the 5.9 GHz spectrum while exploring methods for sharing the spectrum with other users in a manner that maintains priority use for vehicle safety communications."

² <https://www.transportation.gov/research-and-technology/operational-connected-vehicle-deployments-us>

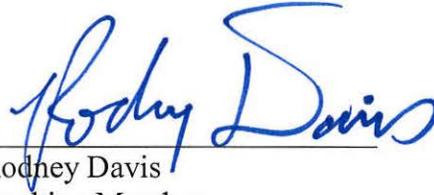
For these reasons, we ask that the FCC reject a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that reallocates spectrum within the 5.9 GHz band for unlicensed uses, such as Wi-Fi. Maintaining the 5.9GHz band for vehicle safety communications will make our transportation networks safer and more efficient and should not be compromised.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you to continue promoting the safety of our transportation system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sam Graves", written over a horizontal line.

Sam Graves
Ranking Member

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rodney Davis", written over a horizontal line.

Rodney Davis
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

cc:

The Honorable Elaine Chao, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation