



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE  
CHAIRWOMAN

January 11, 2024

John Stankey  
Chief Executive Officer  
AT&T Services, Inc.  
208 S. Akard Street  
Dallas TX 75202

Dear Mr. Stankey,

A little over a week ago, The New York Times published a chilling report that describes how connected cars are being weaponized in abusive relationships.<sup>1</sup> As you know, modern cars offer a range of features that improve convenience for drivers, like assistance locating a car in a parking lot, turning a car on remotely, and connecting with first responders in an emergency without a phone. But as the report noted, these features rely on wireless connectivity and location data that in the wrong hands can be used to harm partners in abusive relationships in a number of ways.

For example, the report recounts in detail how a woman was tracked by a former partner through connected services associated with the car she was using. In another example, a man used his remote access to the car to harass his wife by activating the car's lights and horns at night and running the car's heat on hot days. The report finds that car makers have been reluctant or unwilling to assist victims of this abuse or restrict abusive partner access to the car's connectivity and data—particularly when a victim co-owns the vehicle or is not named on its title.

As you are aware, last year, the Federal Communications Commission was charged with implementing the Safe Connections Act. This law provides the FCC with authority to assist survivors of domestic violence and abuse with secure access to communications. Congress recognized that communications services, such as through phones, are lifelines for survivors of domestic violence and abuse, and that a phone is a gateway to building a new life, away from harm. In our first order implementing this statute, we required covered providers to separate phone lines linked to family plans where the abuser is on the account. With this option, survivors can safely separate from family plans and keep their phone and phone number—keeping them connected to their friends, family, and supporters.

Having access to a car is also a critical lifeline. It is means of escape and independence, and it is often essential for those seeking access to employment and support. No survivor of domestic violence and abuse should have to choose between giving up their car and allowing themselves to be stalked and harmed by those who can access its data and connectivity.

Cars today are sometimes called “smartphones on wheels.” This new level of connectivity raises questions about whether cars and connectivity plans provisioned in cars should be considered under the

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<sup>1</sup> Kashmir Hill, “Your Car is Tracking You. Abusive Partners May Be, Too. Apps that remotely track and control cars are being weaponized by abusive partners. Car manufacturers have been slow to respond, according to victims and experts.” The New York Times, Dec. 31, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/31/technology/car-trackers-gps-abuse.html>.

Safe Connections Act, which was specifically enacted to address where “perpetrators of violence and abuse . . . increasingly use technological and communications tools to exercise control over, monitor, and abuse their victims.”<sup>2</sup> To assist us at the FCC in understanding how we can better fulfill our duties under the Safe Connections Act and help survivors of domestic violence, we request that you please respond to the following questions:

- (1) Please describe in detail the connectivity options that your company makes, or has agreed to make, available in vehicles (whether sold separately or in partnership with automobile manufacturers) and identify each automobile manufacturer to which they pertain. Please include in your response information about the following:
  - a. Wireless spectrum for which your company holds licenses or leases and uses to provide connected car services or in-vehicle connectivity.
  - b. Connected apps, devices, or other features that allow for tracking the vehicle’s location that your company provisions.
  - c. Connected apps, devices, or other features that allow for remote access and/or control to the vehicle’s lights, horns, air conditioning, heating or other features that your company provisions.
  - d. The ability to call or communicate with an S.O.S. service or call emergency services.
  - e. The availability of a phone number that is unique to the vehicle.
- (2) Does your company provide connected car services to consumers who are not otherwise customers or subscribers to your commercial mobile services?
- (3) Please describe the policies and processes that your company has in place to comply with the Safe Connections Act. Please explain whether you have applied these processes and policies to connected car services that your company offers.
- (4) How does your company retain, share, and/or sell a driver’s geolocation data that is collected by connected apps, devices, or other features included in the vehicle?

Please send your response to the undersigned via email ([jessica.rosenworcel@fcc.gov](mailto:jessica.rosenworcel@fcc.gov)) by January 26, 2024.

Sincerely,



cc: Rhonda Johnson

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<sup>2</sup> Safe Connections Act of 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-223, 136 Stat. 2280 (2022) (codified at 47 U.S.C. § 345).



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE  
CHAIRWOMAN

January 11, 2024

Mike Sievert  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
T-Mobile  
3618 Factoria Boulevard SE  
Bellevue, WA 98006

Dear Mr. Sievert,

A little over a week ago, The New York Times published a chilling report that describes how connected cars are being weaponized in abusive relationships.<sup>1</sup> As you know, modern cars offer a range of features that improve convenience for drivers, like assistance locating a car in a parking lot, turning a car on remotely, and connecting with first responders in an emergency without a phone. But as the report noted, these features rely on wireless connectivity and location data that in the wrong hands can be used to harm partners in abusive relationships in a number of ways.

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Sincerely,



cc: Edward Smith

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE  
CHAIRWOMAN

January 11, 2024

Hans Vestburg  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
Verizon  
One Verizon Way  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

Dear Mr. Vestberg,

A little over a week ago, The New York Times published a chilling report that describes how connected cars are being weaponized in abusive relationships.<sup>1</sup> As you know, modern cars offer a range of features that improve convenience for drivers, like assistance locating a car in a parking lot, turning a car on remotely, and connecting with first responders in an emergency without a phone. But as the report noted, these features rely on wireless connectivity and location data that in the wrong hands can be used to harm partners in abusive relationships in a number of ways.

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Please send your response to the undersigned via email ([jessica.rosenworcel@fcc.gov](mailto:jessica.rosenworcel@fcc.gov)) by January 26, 2024.

Sincerely,



cc: Kathleen M. Grillo

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