United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 6, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) Appropriations legislation, we write to express our strong support for the Department of Transportation's (USDOT) efforts to advance connected and automated vehicle (CAV) technology. Specifically, we request the committee include robust funding to support the safe testing and deployment of CAV technologies at USDOT-designated proving grounds.

The auto industry is in the midst of a seismic technological shift that will revolutionize the transportation of people and goods in our lifetime. Connected and self-driving cars can reduce dramatically the more than 35,000 lives lost on our roads and highways every year and to transform fundamentally the way we get around.

Ensuring that American innovators can safely develop and implement this technology will not only save lives but also solidify our nation's position as the world leader in the future of mobility. Connected and automated vehicles are going to be developed internationally if we do not take the lead in making sure these technologies are advanced right here in the United States. It is critical that the Federal government play a leadership role in ensuring that CAV technologies are safely developed and tested in a thorough and thoughtful manner, aligned with voluntary industry standards.

USDOT, recognizing this urgent need, last year solicited proposals from facilities across the country to be designated as Automated Vehicle Proving Grounds. The intent was to form an initial network of proving grounds focused on the advancement of automated vehicle technology.

After evaluating more than 60 applicants under a rigorous and detailed set of selection criteria, USDOT chose ten proving grounds with complementary features and capabilities. Together, those facilities collectively form a federal Community of Practice around the safe testing and deployment of CAV technologies.

Identifying and selecting these initial proving grounds was a crucial first step, but USDOT must now be given the resources to work quickly to ensure that testing and evaluation at these facilities can begin as soon as possible. Technology in this area is changing rapidly, and only through thorough testing can we both encourage innovation and assure public confidence in these revolutionary technologies.

We therefore urge that robust funding be appropriated in FY2018 to support these USDOT-designated proving grounds. USDOT should be directed to use such funds to support the development of

these ten proving grounds and to promote the creation and sharing of best practices for the safe conduct of testing and operations, which will accelerate the pace of safe deployment.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you to advance the development and deployment of this revolutionary and life-saving technology. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Sydney Paul with Senator Peters at sydney_paul@peters.senate.gov.

Sincerely,

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Richard Burr
United States Senator

Bill Nelson
United States Senator

Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator