

United States Senate

November 25, 2025

The Honorable Jonathan Morrison
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Morrison,

The United States continues to face a tragic road safety crisis. Four years ago, Congress passed the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law*, which included several crucial provisions to reduce motor vehicle deaths and make our roads safer for all road users. Unfortunately, nearly a half decade after passage, many of these provisions are still stuck in a bureaucratic traffic jam, all while American lives are unnecessarily lost. We, therefore, request clear, immediate answers on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) implementation of the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's* vehicle safety provisions.

Thanks to the Biden administration's work to improve road safety, including the implementation of certain lifesaving provisions in the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law*, road fatalities have fallen each year since their peak in 2021. This trend continued during the first half of 2025, with an eight percent decline in roadway fatalities.¹ During this period, the Biden NHTSA notably finalized the lifesaving rule on automatic emergency braking and proposed other critical rules such as updating seatback safety standards. The reversal in motor vehicle deaths is an important step forward and an indication that the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's* evidence-based interventions are having a real impact.

Although this dip in fatalities is welcome, NHTSA cannot take its foot off the gas. The agency has not yet implemented many provisions in the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law*, even though their statutory deadlines have passed, including the provision requiring new cars be equipped with a system to alert the driver to check rear seats after the engine is turned off.² Moreover, the Trump administration's history of relaxing auto safety standards and hamstringing regulators raises serious concerns about its commitment to motor vehicle safety. Notably, during his first Administration, President Donald Trump paused or withdrew at least a dozen safety regulations, including new lifesaving technology for heavy-duty trucks.³ These actions cost lives: Traffic fatalities rose by 15 percent during his first term, from 37,473 deaths in 2017 to 43,230 in 2021.⁴ Without a sustained commitment to motor vehicle safety, this reversal could happen again, particularly given President Trump's blunt Executive Order to rescind ten regulations for every

¹ Press Release, Nat'l Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NHTSA Reports Sharp Drop in Traffic Fatalities in First Half of 2025 (Sept. 16, 2025), <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/nhtsa-reports-sharp-drop-traffic-fatalities-first-half-2025>.

² See Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. No. 117–58, 135 Stat. 429 (2021).

³ Joan Lowy and Tom Krisher, *Transport Safety Rules Rolled Back Under Trump*, Associated Press (Feb. 26, 2018), <https://apnews.com/article/1936e77a11924c909880f1ef014c7ca7>.

one promulgated.⁵ This order — like much of the Trump administration’s regulatory agenda — thoughtlessly hacks away regulations without regard for their impact on safety. Regardless of the executive order, NHTSA has a statutory obligation to implement the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* and keep the public safe.

NHTSA is statutorily required to submit biannual rulemaking status reports to Congress.⁶ Last year, the Biden administration published a report in February and in December. Congress has yet to receive a report this year. Accordingly, we request a detailed written update — by December 16, 2025 — on the following key provisions and their precise implementation status:

1. **Recall Completion (Sec. 24202)**, which directs NHTSA to publish an annual list of recall completion rates. This list appears to be public.
2. **Motor Vehicle Seatback Safety Standards (Sec. 24204)**, which directs NHTSA to issue an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) and final rule if determined appropriate to update Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 207 regarding seatback safety standards. In July 2024, NHTSA published an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on car seatback safety but has not made any further public progress on a final rule.
3. **Automatic Shutoff (Sec. 24505)**, which directs NHTSA to issue a final rule to require manufacturers of vehicles with keyless ignitions to install a device that automatically shuts off the vehicle after it idles for a certain period. NHTSA’s December 2024 rulemaking status report stated that it was still conducting preliminary research and planned to publish a supplemental NPRM in Summer 2025 but the agency has still not published any rulemaking.⁷
4. **Crash Avoidance Technology (Sec. 24208)**, which directs NHTSA to issue minimum performance standards for crash avoidance technologies and to require all cars be equipped with a forward collision warning and automatic emergency braking system as well as a lane departure warning and lane keeping assist system. NHTSA finalized a rule on this issue in September 2024.
5. **Reduction in Driver Distraction (Sec. 24209)**, which directs NHTSA to conduct research on driver monitoring systems to reduce driver distraction and driver disengagement. NHTSA is scheduled to discuss driver distraction research at an upcoming public meeting but has not released any public research.⁸

⁴ Institute for Highway Safety, *Yearly Snapshot* (Nov. 6, 2025), <https://www.iihs.org/research-areas/fatality-statistics/detail/yearly-snapshot>.

⁵ Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation, 90 Fed. Reg. 9065 (Feb. 6, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/06/2025-02345/unleashing-prosperity-through-deregulation>.

⁶ See Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 (2021).

⁷ Nat’l Highway Traffic Safety Admin, *Report to Congress*, (Dec. 2024), <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2024-12/report-congress-status-rulemakings-december-2024.pdf>.

⁸ Nat’l Highway Traffic Safety Admin, *NHTSA Safety Research Portfolio Public Meeting: Fall 2025*, (Nov. 11, 2025), <https://www.nhtsa.gov/events/nhtsa-safety-research-portfolio-public-meeting-fall-2025>.

6. **Headlamps (Sec. 24212)**, which directs NHTSA to issue a final rule amending FMVSS 108 regarding performance-based standards for vehicle headlamps. NHTSA's December 2024 rulemaking status report stated that it planned to publish a NPRM in Summer 2025 but the agency has still not published any rulemaking.⁹
7. **Hood and Bumper Standards (Sec. 24214)**, which directs NHTSA to request comment on potential updates to hood and bumper standards. In December 2023, NHTSA indicated that it was requesting feedback from stakeholders and would submit the report to Congress within the prescribed two-year time period.¹⁰ This provision was not included in NHTSA's 2024 rulemaking status report.
8. **Early Warning Reporting (Sec. 24216)**, which directs NHTSA to conduct a study on existing requirements for manufacturers to report information and data to the Department of Transportation to help identify potential safety issues. In May 2023, NHTSA submitted the report to Congress.
9. **Advanced Impaired Driver Technology (Sec. 24220)**, which directs NHTSA to issue a final rule requiring new vehicles to be equipped with impaired driving prevention technology. NHTSA published an ANPRM in January 2024 but has indicated no timeline to finalize the rule.
10. **Child Safety (Sec. 24222)**, which directs NHTSA to issue a final rule requiring new cars to be equipped with a system to alert the driver to check rear seats after the engine is turned off. NHTSA's December 2024 rulemaking status report stated NHTSA has been delayed in completing the rulemaking because an effective technology is not yet available. NHTSA stated that the technology would advance sufficiently to publish an NPRM in 2025 but the agency has not published any rulemaking.¹¹

We also request a written acknowledgment that these provisions are required under the law and are not superseded or otherwise affected by President Trump's executive order requiring the removal of ten regulations for every new regulation promulgated, nor used as impetus to cut other existing safety regulations.

NHTSA's mission is not to coast along while industry self-regulates. The American public needs NHTSA to move from kicking the tires on lifesaving standards to getting them on the road. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this vital mission of reducing traffic deaths.

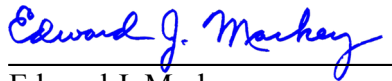
Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

⁹ Nat'l Highway Traffic Safety Admin, *Report to Congress* (Dec. 2024), <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2024-12/report-congress-status-rulemakings-december-2024.pdf>.

¹⁰ Letter from Ann Carlson, Acting Administrator, Nat'l Highway Traffic Safety Administration, to Senator Ed Markey (Dec. 22, 2023).

¹¹ Nat'l Highway Traffic Safety Admin, *Report to Congress* (Dec. 2024),

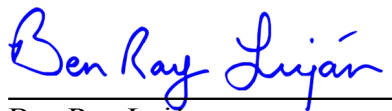
Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



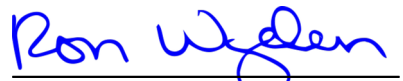
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator