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The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to highlight a critical, commonsense step Congress can take to improve roadway safety as we work to reauthorize the multi-year surface transportation bill. As a long-time member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I am committed to supporting practical, proven safety technologies that save lives without imposing burdens on consumers, small businesses, or state partners.

One such technology is addressed in my bipartisan and bicameral legislation, the Collision Avoidance Systems Act (H.R. 1361/S. 2290). This bill clarifies federal regulatory uncertainty surrounding the use of a proven safety technology that has been on the market for 25 years: a pulsating center high-mounted stop lamp that increases visibility, improves driver awareness, and reduces rear-end collisions by more than 30 percent. This device has been installed in approximately four million vehicles across the country, with states including California, Maryland, Tennessee, and Texas already authorizing its use.

Despite this long record of safe and effective use, federal regulations have created uncertainty for dealerships and consumers. Although the pulsating brake light device meets performance requirements under Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 108, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has considered enforcement actions against dealerships that install it. Such actions threaten long-standing small businesses and would restrict consumer access to a cost-effective safety improvement that vehicle owners can have installed in their vehicles. This regulatory uncertainty persists even though Congress directed NHTSA to conduct a study and initiate a rulemaking process on the FMVSS 108 standards in 2019.

It was not until September 2024, four years after Congress first acted, that NHTSA announced a project award to Virginia Tech to study the effectiveness of pulsating brake lights. While I am pleased that the study is finally underway, we already know the following to be true:

- A pulsating center high-mounted brake light is a proven, low-cost, and effective technology that is currently mandated to be installed in all new vehicles in Europe.

- It enhances visibility precisely when drivers need it most, during the first moments of braking.
- It offers a safety upgrade for older vehicles at a time when the cost of purchasing a new vehicle continues to rise (roughly \$50,000 for a new light-duty vehicle).
- Dealerships and consumers want clarity, not conflicting signals that discourage responsible safety innovation, which is used by countless law enforcement agencies on their vehicles.
- States, industries, and federal agencies, including the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, have already recognized its value – including the fact that U.S. DOT recently extended the authority for such pulsating brake lights to be used on tractor trailers due to the 30+ percent reduction in rear-end collisions.

Congress has the opportunity to act, and the bipartisan Collision Avoidance Systems Act provides the clarity needed to help reduce vehicle crashes. This common-sense legislation confirms that FMVSS 108 permits the use of pulsating high-mounted brake lamps, directs the Department of Transportation to issue performance-based standards within 180 days of enactment to standardize the safety technology, and leaves adoption entirely voluntary for consumers. This is not a mandate. It is a pathway for consumers, states, and dealerships to continue using a proven technology that is validated by decades of real-world experience.

As we begin our work on the 2026 Surface Transportation Reauthorization, I urge my colleagues to ensure this bipartisan legislation, which I may add, has no direct taxpayer costs, is included as part of a comprehensive effort to modernize our safety framework. Doing so will:

- Provide regulatory certainty to dealerships and small businesses;
- Support innovation and flexibility while reinforcing our commitment to data-driven safety policy; and
- Maintain consumer access to cost-effective safety improvements by ensuring that a well-established technology remains available.

Ensuring safety on American roads should not be controversial. It should be our shared goal. The Collision Avoidance Systems Act represents the type of bipartisan, practical policy solution that we as Members of Congress should champion.

I look forward to our committees working together to deliver a Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill that includes this clear and straightforward legislation to continue protecting American drivers, supporting innovation, and moving our transportation system forward.

Sincerely,



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress