

**Opening Statement of Chairman Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade Hearing on
“Disrupter Series: Self-Driving Cars”
November 15, 2016**

Today our Disrupter Series continues as we examine self-driving cars. Keeping Americans safe on the road has been a top priority for the committee. Being from the auto state, I know just how dedicated the auto industry and Michigan’s premier research institutions are to developing a roadway system that is accident and defect free.

This work is critical - especially when considering that traffic fatalities are on the rise for the first time in more than a decade. In Michigan, there were nearly 1,000 fatalities last year alone. And I am told that, nationwide, the fatality numbers are up again in the first half of this year.

Today’s hearing on self-driving cars gives us an opportunity to examine how the innovation in Michigan and across the country can literally save lives.

The question is: how do we get there? How do we make sure that the software, maps, and sensors powering driverless cars are adequately researched and tested to guarantee that they’re ready for deployment and safe for American drivers? How do we ensure that policymakers, at both the state and federal level, are prepared for and understand the capabilities of vehicle automation technologies? The most important thing is to make sure that government, at any level, doesn’t hinder the development of this potentially game changing technology.

NHTSA's recently-released policy guidance was a constructive first step in starting this conversation but also gives way to new questions. Back home in Michigan, an effort has already begun to address these issues. Michigan's proposed American Center for Mobility at Willow Run has the opportunity to offer policymakers and auto manufacturers across the nation, and around the world, a one-stop-shop for testing and certification for connected and automated vehicle technologies.

Using over 330 acres of land, this proposed test facility accommodates a number of roadway and driving conditions that will be critical for development and deployment of autonomous car technology. With close proximity to Michigan's vehicle-to-infrastructure corridor, University of Michigan's Mcity testing facility, and home to many of our nation's automakers, this represents a prime location for folks to test advanced automotive technologies and prepare for the future of vehicle transportation.

As I have often said before: auto safety is a matter of life and death. Because of this technology's life-saving potential, we cannot let the government get this wrong.

I look forward to a valuable discussion on the positive and transformative impact that self-driving cars could have on the safety of the driving public.