

**Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden**  
**Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection**  
**“Self-Driving Cars: Road to Deployment”**  
**February 14, 2017**

In the last Congress, this subcommittee examined multiple emerging technologies that are creating new opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and increased consumer choice in today’s growing digital economy. From the Internet of Things and health apps, to drones and robotics, and the revolutionary capabilities of 3-D printing, many of these technologies are transforming commerce and creating new opportunities for economic prosperity in America for generations to come.

Without question, one of the most exciting developments in 21<sup>st</sup> century commerce is self-driving cars. As traffic accidents are on the rise, automated driving systems have the potential to transform our transportation system into one that is safer and more secure for everyone on the roadways. The promise of self-driving cars to save thousands of lives in the United States and around the world cannot be understated. And we should remember that this technology doesn’t have to be perfect to significantly improve safety.

But, the benefits of self-driving cars do not stop at safety. This technology can increase transportation access to underserved communities, expand labor productivity, improve mobility, reduce congestion, and drive new efficiencies and cost savings into businesses. In turn, increasing opportunities for job creation and investment.

However, the realization of these benefits starts with ensuring that the technology powering self-driving cars is safe and ready for consumer adoption. This will require testing. As this committee continues to encourage the deployment of this life-saving technology, our goal is to foster an environment allowing companies the flexibility to test self-driving cars at home, so that the innovation, investment, and development of these vehicles occurs in the United States. Never has there been a more opportune time to lead in the development of this technology, as it has a beneficial effect on every individual in this country.

In laying the groundwork for this committee’s agenda, it does not mean that we issue a blank check for testing and deployment anywhere across the country. As with any new innovation and developing technology, proper oversight is key. Rather, this is a call to create a framework that allows this technology to safely develop and a call for innovation to flourish without the heavy hand of government. Overly prescriptive regulations on self-driving cars will stop the very thing we are trying to create: an accident-free transportation system that is safe and secure for all roadway users. That said, we will be monitoring the industry closely and will move quickly if a technology is proven unsafe.

This hearing today will help us better understand how to achieve that goal. It will inform us of manufacturers and developers’ testing efforts and how to support plans for the deployment of self-driving cars. Our witnesses will also help us to understand the challenges of testing and

deployment and how to address those challenges in a way that fosters innovation and protects American consumers.

Safety is critical here. Manufacturers and other entities developing self-driving cars have every incentive to get this right. There are tremendous economic and societal opportunities ahead for consumers if we lay the proper foundation for the success and advancement of this technology.