

**Opening Statement of Representative Latta
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Hearing on Enhancing Vehicular Technology to Prevent Drunk Driving
March 14, 2019**

“As Prepared for Delivery”

Good morning, I would like to thank our Chair holding this important hearing, and I thank our witnesses for being here. Today, we have the opportunity to discuss how we can utilize different technologies to address and prevent drunk- and drugged-driving.

Over 10,000 people lost their lives in 2017 in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. We have also seen a significant increase in the number of American drivers killed in vehicle crashes in which drugs were detected. Ninety-four percent of overall vehicle accidents are attributable to human errors or decisions. The statistics are staggering and show that it is imperative that the public and private sectors work together on solutions to prevent more tragedies.

Amid the devastating opioid crisis, and as more states legalize the use of marijuana, tackling this problem is now more important than ever. According to the Governors Highway Safety Association, in 2016 the number of drivers who were fatally injured in accidents with drugs in their system surpassed the number of those with alcohol in their system for the first time.

That is why last Congress I recognized the importance of promoting and fostering innovation in self-driving vehicle technology. As Chairman of this Subcommittee, I introduced the bipartisan SELF-DRIVE Act, which would have clarified the Federal and State roles in regulating self-driving vehicles, ensured consumer safety, reduced traffic-related fatalities and injuries, and improved mobility for individuals with disabilities. U.S. companies are investing major resources in the research and development of this technology and the SELF-DRIVE Act would have removed outdated regulations that were created when self-driving vehicles were considered science fiction.

Since this legislation passed unanimously both in Committee and on the House Floor, it is my hope that we can make this a priority again this Congress.

We have an opportunity through technology to make investments needed in self-driving technology as one step to ending senseless deaths on our roads. Until that day comes, we need to do all we can to raise awareness of the dangers of impaired driving. Again, I want to thank our members and staff on both sides of the aisle for their bipartisan legislation.

Thank you again, and I yield back my time.