

## **Additional Questions for the Record**

**Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce**  
**Hearing on**  
**“Summer Driving Dangers: Exploring Ways to Protect Drivers and Their Families”**  
**May 23, 2019**

**Mr. Gary Shapiro, President and CEO**  
**Consumer Technology Association**

**The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, M.D. (R-TX)**

1. Mr. Shapiro, counterfeit automotive parts have been a threat to vehicle operators for many years. In 2012, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued a consumer safety advisory on the dangers of counterfeit airbags. In 2014, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) uncovered an operation by two Canadians to import counterfeit Chinese-made airbags and mail them to U.S. customers.

Recently, a woman in the 26th District of Texas was killed when her vehicle struck a tree and the counterfeit airbag did not deploy. In fact, there was no airbag. The airbag had been repaired following a previous accident by inserting a rag and covering it with silicon putty. I have also learned that airbag theft has become a serious problem due to the lack of replacement parts for recalled Takata airbags.

- a. Are there technology-based solutions that can help secure the automotive supply chain?
- b. Could technology improve the ability to populate the supply chain in order to reduce the demand for stolen parts?
- c. Are there solutions that can help alert a vehicle owner or operator of a potentially counterfeit part?

While this is beyond CTA’s area of expertise, technology-based solutions can help secure the automotive supply chain. “Smart Supply Chain” chip technologies, rooted in cybersecurity, are specifically intended to deter device or chip counterfeiting. The Automotive Anti-Counterfeiting Council works to identify and eliminate counterfeit auto parts and cooperates with law enforcement.

2. Mr. Shapiro, self-driving vehicles are supposed to reduce vehicle accidents

because of their ability to detect and react to other vehicles. Yet, full deployment is many years down the road.

- a. Do you foresee a future in which airbags are no longer needed due to the proliferation and precision of self-driving vehicles?

Fully self-driving vehicles are still in the early stages of development. They will be great, but not perfect for several years. They will reduce the number of collisions we suffer from today. Companies are experimenting with different configurations and still determining what equipment will be needed. It is too early to say whether airbags or other equipment that is standard today will be required in the future. Airbags and other equipment are mandated by Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS). Some of these will become outdated and not be necessary for fully self-driving vehicles. Congress and the Department of Transportation should address this issue and consider ways to update or replace the FMVSS that could limit or prevent the deployment of SDVs.

3. Mr. Shapiro, I understand that technology to identify a human or pet in the backseat of a vehicle is available and being implemented by some manufacturers.

- a. When do you anticipate widespread adoption of this technology in new vehicles?

As I discussed in my opening statement, different technologies exist for identifying rear-seat occupants and alerting the driver. Some are incorporated in the vehicle itself as original equipment, and many other technologies (car seats with occupant alerts, clip-ons, phone alerts, apps) can be incorporated into vehicles that do not have that feature already added. As our vehicle technology continues to advance, our roads will become much safer for all passengers, and one day, self-driving vehicles will prevent nearly all roadway deaths. We must continue to focus on removing roadblocks from incorporating this technology and getting SDVs on the roads.

4. Mr. Shapiro, I believe consumer education is essential to maximizing the safety benefits of not only advanced driver assistance systems, but also self-driving vehicles.

- a. How should the industry work to educate consumers on the capabilities of systems in vehicles today?

Consumer education is a crucial piece of the puzzle in fully implementing ADAS and SDVs. Many of these technologies are costly so companies are incentivized to educate consumers on the capabilities of their vehicles today, but as an industry, we can do better. That is why CTA was a founding member of the Partners for Automated Vehicle Education (PAVE) Coalition. PAVE's goal is to do exactly what you suggest- educate consumers on the capabilities and benefits of SDVs.

- b. Is there anything you think we can be doing to improve consumer understanding and trust in these systems?

We must emphasize the life-saving benefits of self-driving vehicles, and clearly communicate with consumers about their strengths and weaknesses. Industry must be clear about exactly what their technology can and cannot do. It may take more time to teach consumers how to use the technology, but for the sake of public safety we must do so. Bad actors eliminate consumer trust and could hurt consumers and inhibit government acceptance of this technology. That is why I believe new companies who over-promise their customers self-driving capabilities and under deliver are not only potentially hurting their own customers but damaging the rapid and safe deployment of self-driving vehicles.