

**Opening Statement of Chair Gus M. Bilirakis**  
**As Prepared for Delivery**  
**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce**  
**Hearing titled “Preserving Americans’ Access to AM Radio”**  
**April 30, 2024**

Good morning, welcome to today’s legislative hearing on Preserving Americans’ Access to AM Radio, where we will be examining discussion draft legislation titled, the “AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act.” I’m looking forward to hearing from our witnesses, who each have a unique perspective on this debate.

Every one of us here, both the witnesses and Members on this dais, should agree there is a distinct importance of having a robust and widely accessible communications infrastructure to alert Americans and ensure public safety in the event of emergencies and natural disasters. Our citizens should have quick access to critical information, which helps them make timely and potentially lifesaving decisions to evacuate, stay in place, seek shelter, or contact first responders.

The Emergency Alert System plays a crucial role in this infrastructure, as it can be used across our nation to disseminate this important emergency information. I’ve long been a champion for improving these public alerts to ensure they reach everyone, as I was the sponsor of the Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS) Modernization Act, which was enacted into law and authorized an update to these systems to incorporate multiple communications technologies both presently and in the future. The system’s requirements also meant alerts needed to go to the largest portion of affected population feasible, including those with access and functional needs, individuals with disabilities, and those in rural and remote areas. States like Florida rely on this system during hurricanes to alert people to dangers related to such powerful storms.

I believe this is where AM Radio can become so important and will continue to be into the future. According to Nielsen Media Research, radio broadcasts still has the highest reach of any medium, capable of reaching [91% of American adults](#), with a majority of listening taking place outside of the home. We know that AM radio signals in particular can cover a larger geographic area, especially when other networks fail. Furthermore, people in my district and elsewhere in the most diverse of settings enjoy the differing viewpoints and local perspectives that AM Radio offers. I know in my district in Citrus County, Florida, I hear from constituents on a regular basis how much they enjoy listening to local news on AM Radio, as well as particularly the conservative and Christian radio stations that are in the Tampa Bay area.

So when we heard that reports that certain automobile manufacturers were exploring the idea of getting rid of this option for American consumers, many here in Congress (including myself) expressed concerns – I believe we should maintain as many available options for Americans as

possible. This is why we are here to discuss the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act. This legislation will require the Department of Transportation to work with the FCC to issue a nationwide standard to ensure that new vehicles have access to AM Radio stations.

Now, generally speaking, I do have concerns about broad government mandates, and I hope we can have a robust and constructive discussion from each of our witnesses to ensure that we get this right, and that we are not inadvertently hampering innovation both now and in the future. We must also ensure we don't cause undue cost burdens onto our constituents.

Nevertheless, Americans deserve to have the highest number of options for how they receive information in their homes and in their cars. I look forward to hearing from each of our witnesses and I yield back.