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6 PRESERVING AMERICANS' ACCESS TO AM RADIO

7 TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2024

8 House of Representatives,

9 Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce,

10 Committee on Energy and Commerce,

11 Washington, D.C.

12

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15 The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:31 a.m. in

16 2322 of the Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gus

17 Bilirakis, [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

18

19 Present: Representatives Bilirakis, Walberg, Duncan,

20 Dunn, Lesko, Armstrong, Fulcher, Harshbarger, Obernolte,

21 James, Rodgers (ex officio); Schakowsky, Castor, Dingell,

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22 Kelly, Soto, and Pallone (ex officio).

23 Also present: Representative Carter.

24

25

26 Staff Present: Michael Cameron, Professional Staff
27 Member; Jessica Herron, Clerk; Emily King, Member Services
28 Director; Tim Kurth, Chief Counsel; Brannon Rains,
29 Professional Staff Member; Teddy Tanzer, Senior Counsel;
30 Hannah Anton, Minority Policy Analyst; Keegan Cardman,
31 Minority Staff Assistant; Waverly Gordon, Minority Deputy
32 Staff Director and General Counsel; Daniel Greene, Minority
33 Professional Staff Member; Tiffany Guarascio, Minority Staff
34 Director; Lisa Hone, Minority Chief Counsel, Innovation,
35 Data, and Commerce; Mackenzie Kuhl, Minority Digital Manager;
36 Joe Orlando, Minority Junior Professional Staff Member; and
37 Andrew Souvall, Minority Director of Communications,
38 Outreach, and Member Services.

39

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40 *Mr. Bilirakis. The subcommittee will come to order.

41 Again, good morning. Welcome to today's legislative
42 hearing on preserving Americans' access to AM radio, where we
43 will be examining discussion draft legislation titled the AM
44 Radio for Every Vehicle Act. I am looking forward to hearing
45 from our witnesses who each have a unique perspective on this
46 debate.

47 Every one of us here, both the witnesses and the members
48 on this dais, should agree that there is a distinct
49 importance of having a robust and widely accessible
50 communications infrastructure to alert Americans and ensure
51 public safety in the event of emergencies and natural disasters
52 _ or excuse me, natural disasters. And I will tell you this:
53 I know everyone cares about this particular issue. It is
54 very vital to our districts.

55 Our citizens should have quick access to critical
56 information, which helps them make timely and potentially
57 lifesaving decisions to evacuate, stay in place, seek
58 shelter, or contact first responders. The Emergency Alert
59 System plays a crucial role in this infrastructure, as it can
60 be used across our nation to disseminate this important

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61 emergency information.

62 I have long been a champion for improving these public
63 alerts to ensure they reach everyone, as I was the sponsor of
64 the Integrated Public Alert Warning System Modernization Act
65 which was enacted into law a long time ago, and authorized an
66 update to these systems to incorporate multiple communication
67 technologies, both presently and in the future.

68 The system's requirements also meant alerts needed to go
69 to the largest portion of affected population feasible,
70 including those with access to functional needs, individuals
71 with disabilities, and those in rural and remote areas.

72 States like Florida rely on this system during
73 hurricanes to alert people to dangers related to such
74 powerful storms. I believe this is where AM radio can become
75 so important and will continue to be in the future.

76 According to the Nielsen Media Research, radio
77 broadcasting still has the highest reach of any medium,
78 capable of reaching 91 percent of American adults, with a
79 majority listening to take place outside of the home, as you
80 know. We know that AM radio signals in particular can cover
81 a large geographic area, especially when other networks fail.

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82 Furthermore, people in my district and elsewhere in the
83 most diverse of settings enjoy the differing viewpoints and
84 local perspectives that AM radio offers. I know in my
85 district in the Citrus County, Hernando County, and Pasco
86 County, as well, I hear from constituents on a regular basis
87 how much they enjoy listening to local news on AM radio, as
88 well as particularly the conservative and Christian radio
89 stations throughout the Tampa Bay area, but also the Nature
90 Coast.

91 So when we heard the reports that certain automobile
92 manufacturers were exploring the idea of getting rid of these
93 options for American consumers, many here in Congress,
94 including myself, expressed concerns, bipartisan concerns. I
95 believe we should maintain as many available options for
96 Americans as possible, and I hope you agree. This is why we
97 are here to discuss the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act. This
98 legislation will require the Department of Transportation to
99 work with the FCC to issue a nationwide standard to ensure
100 that new vehicles have access to AM radio stations.

101 Now, generally speaking, I do have concerns about the
102 broad government mandates, and I hope we can have a robust

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103 and constructive discussion from each of our witnesses to
104 ensure that we get this right _ we must get it right _ and
105 that we are inadvertently hampering _ we don't want to
106 inadvertently hamper innovation both now and in the future.
107 That is very important.

108 We also ensure that we don't cause undue cost burdens
109 onto our constituents. That is a great concern.
110 Nevertheless, Americans deserve to have the highest number of
111 options for how they receive information in their homes and
112 in their cars.

113 So I look forward to this hearing, and hearing from all
114 our witnesses, and I really appreciate you all being here,
115 and you are going to give us some valuable information, I am
116 sure, and we have some good questions for you.

117 [The prepared statement of Mr. Bilirakis follows:]

118

119 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

120

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121 *Mr. Bilirakis. So I will yield back the remainder of
122 our time, and I will recognize the gentlelady, the ranking
123 member of the subcommittee, the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms.
124 Schakowsky, for five minutes for _ so she can give her
125 opening statement.

126 *Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I
127 think you and I are very much on the same page.

128 And not to diminish this issue of AM radio that we are
129 going to be talking about today, in some ways, given all the
130 _ what is going on in the world, in some ways this is kind of
131 a respite to have a typical something from this subcommittee
132 where we deal with everyday issues that affect Americans.

133 And AM radio has been delivering for consumers for, oh,
134 about 100 years right now. And last year over 85 million
135 Americans listened to their AM radios. And even more
136 importantly, we know that AM radio has been very important in
137 protecting consumers when all other ways to talk about
138 disasters, dangers _ that AM radio is there when other
139 platforms fail. And so it has been very important to have AM
140 radio. For example, Hurricane Ida in 2021 was able 24 hours
141 a day to be able to report what the problems were, and we

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142 want to make sure that any kind of disaster is there.

143 But beyond that, we have heard from AARP. Senior
144 citizens are often most vulnerable to issues of safety, but
145 also are among the largest consumers that use AM radio. And
146 we also know that AM radio is important often to Black and
147 Latina, Latino communities. And there are over 600 AM
148 stations that broadcast in languages other than _ that we are
149 used to in the United States, in English. And that is
150 important, that we make sure _ and we are going to hear more
151 testimony about that from experienced experts here.

152 And we also know that AM radio is important often in
153 rural areas and more underserved areas, and where FM may not
154 even be available. So we want to make sure that this is an
155 option that is available.

156 And we know that some auto makers have already begun to
157 issue new cars that don't have in their automobiles the
158 option for AM radio. And that leaves a number of people, I
159 think, maybe surprised that they cannot have what they have
160 been using for many years or relying on in the past.

161 So this is an important discussion, and I think that we
162 can work together on a bipartisan basis here. I am looking

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163 forward to hearing from the witnesses on how the loss of AM
164 radio in the car _ what it could mean to them, and I look
165 forward to the discussion today.

166 [The prepared statement of Ms. Schakowsky follows:]

167

168 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

169

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170 *Ms. Schakowsky. And I yield back my time.

171 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you very much. The gentlelady
172 yields back. I now recognize the chair of the full
173 committee, Mrs. Rodgers, for her five minutes opening
174 statement.

175 You are recognized.

176 *The Chair. Good morning, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.
177 I appreciate the witnesses being here to provide their
178 perspectives on the important legislation being discussed to
179 preserve the American people's access to AM radio.

180 This committee is at the forefront of advancing
181 legislation that will strengthen American leadership in
182 cutting-edge technologies. At the same time, as we make the
183 transition to these new technologies, it is vital that we are
184 mindful of unintended consequences and how these kinds of
185 transitions can impact our communities.

186 Communities across the country are now beginning to feel
187 the impact of some automakers deciding to permanently remove
188 AM radio from new vehicle models. At a hearing last year
189 this committee discussed how important access to AM radio
190 continues to be for many of our constituents. For the people

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191 of eastern Washington, it is how they hear the news in their
192 communities, listen to sports, and receive critical
193 information during emergencies. In some parts of my district
194 people have limited access to FM radio and broadband. So AM
195 radio is the only source of information.

196 Eastern Washington is far from unique when it comes to
197 our reliance on AM radio. Many members of this committee
198 have constituents who find themselves in similar situations.
199 That is why it is concerning that some auto manufacturers
200 have taken steps to remove AM radios from new vehicle models,
201 while disregarding the impact. This decision would affect
202 tens of millions of Americans. Some estimates show that more
203 than 45 million Americans tune in to AM radio each month.

204 AM radio is unique. Not only is it free to consumers,
205 but in comparison to alternatives it can be transmitted over
206 long distances with relatively low power. It also provides
207 an existence for small broadcasters, especially religious and
208 minority broadcasters that are highly valued by many
209 Americans, myself included. Removing AM radios from vehicles
210 puts their future at risk.

211 I know some people are quick to dismiss this issue by

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212 saying there is plenty of outlets for such content. But
213 while people in some parts of the country have been able to
214 take advantage of alternative options in vehicles for
215 accessing AM radio like streaming services or satellite
216 radio, these options are still unavailable in many places.

217 We also know from our hearing last year that AM is
218 especially resilient and dependable in emergencies. It is
219 the core piece of our National Public Warning System, a
220 system used by national, state, and local authorities to
221 communicate lifesaving information. Members up and down the
222 dais across both sides of the aisle have had firsthand
223 experiences dealing with natural disasters in their states,
224 including wildfires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, even
225 earthquakes.

226 And while other forms of communication have failed
227 during these incidents, AM radio has often remained
228 resilient, operational, and has been the calming voice in the
229 storm when on the go. Just last week it was reported that
230 when tornadoes swept across the Midwest, many people were
231 receiving critical emergency updates via AM radio in their
232 cars.

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233 We are at a moment where we, as the representatives of
234 the people, are being forced to intervene on behalf of the
235 people because their concerns continue to be ignored by
236 corporations making consumer vehicles. I do not consider a
237 mandate on manufacturers to continue including AM radio in
238 vehicles lightly. But in reality _ but the reality is that
239 automakers have been aware of these bipartisan, bicameral
240 concerns for a long time, and have yet to adequately address
241 them with any private sector solutions. It is disappointing.
242 And ultimately, it is why we are here today having this
243 discussion.

244 Whether they are tuning in for local news, agricultural
245 and weather reports, information during an emergency, or to
246 listen to their favorite talk show personality, AM radio
247 continues to be a trusted way for Americans to stay
248 connected.

249 AM radio fosters a sense of local identity, connecting
250 people through regional programming that reflects the unique
251 perspectives and traditions of their communities. It is
252 closer to the people telling the stories and sharing the
253 perspectives that the national news doesn't cover and

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254 sometimes ignores, and it plays a crucial role in ensuring
255 local government accountability.

256 I look forward to moving past this issue and getting
257 back to working in a bipartisan manner on other key issues
258 for the future of vehicles in this country, like autonomous
259 vehicle legislation so that America remains the leader in
260 automotive innovation, not China.

261 I look forward to a productive discussion today. As we
262 discuss how to navigate our increasingly digital world, let
263 us not forget the enduring and necessary role AM radio
264 continues to play for people across the country.

265 [The prepared statement of The Chair follows:]

266

267 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

268

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269 *The Chair. Thank you, I yield back.

270 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you, thank you. Very well said.

271 And, you know, it is very typical under your leadership,

272 Madam Chair, that we represent _ we speak on behalf of our

273 constituents, and they truly care about this issue.

274 Now I recognize the ranking member of the full

275 committee, the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Pallone, for

276 five minutes for his opening statement.

277 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Chairman Bilirakis.

278 AM radio stations are a vital part of our nation's

279 communications system. Tens of millions of Americans listen

280 to AM radio every month, many while driving. And whether it

281 is listening to community news, baseball games, or religious

282 programing, there are many types of diverse programing that

283 can be found across the AM dial.

284 AM radio also provides potentially lifesaving

285 information during emergencies, particularly when other

286 communication networks fail in the face of hurricanes, fires,

287 floods, and other emergencies. And AM radio stations are an

288 important distribution of emergency alerts, and there is a

289 network of AM broadcast stations specifically designed to

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290 withstand major weather events and other disasters. These
291 stations act as primary entry points for the nation's
292 Emergency Alert System, and the Federal Emergency Management
293 Agency, invest millions of dollars every year to keep these
294 AM radio stations ready to broadcast in emergencies.

295 Now, AM radio played a critical role in my congressional
296 district back in October 2012, when most of coastal New
297 Jersey and New York and many other communities were
298 devastated by Superstorm Sandy. In Monmouth and Middlesex
299 counties in my district we faced sustained winds up to 80
300 miles per hour, and massive amounts of rain that resulted in
301 major flooding and damage to critical infrastructure. The
302 storm caused the largest power outage in New Jersey's
303 history. Many people lost power for days or even weeks.
304 Cell phone, cable, and Internet services were disrupted,
305 leaving entire cities and communities disconnected, and many
306 people in my district and elsewhere were left with very few
307 options for receiving lifesaving information. They turned to
308 trusted radio stations for critical and time sensitive
309 alerts.

310 During Superstorm Sandy and the aftermath, radio

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311 listenership in my district saw a 247 percent increase as my
312 constituents turned to AM radio for information. Many
313 stations, even those who don't typically focus on weather
314 alerts or news, responded by staying on the air. Throughout
315 the storm and its aftermath they transmitted up-to-the-minute
316 information on where to find critical supplies like gas and
317 water, as well as weather warnings and messages from
318 government officials.

319 In New Jersey alone, about 880,000 people evacuated due
320 to the hurricane, taking to the roads to keep their families
321 out of harm's way. And for these families, easy and free
322 access to AM radio in their vehicles was critical to their
323 safety and well-being.

324 Other communities have also relied on AM radio during
325 emergencies, including in Louisiana during Hurricane Ida and
326 in California, when fires devastated Santa Rosa in 2017.
327 Former FEMA administrator Peter Gaynor also recently pointed
328 to February's cellular signal blackout that impacted millions
329 of Americans nationwide to underscore the importance that AM
330 radio plays in our nation's emergency infrastructure.

331 Now, in knowing all of this, I was deeply concerned last

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332 year when some car manufacturers decided to remove AM radio
333 from their new model cars. I am glad to see that Ford and
334 other manufacturers have reversed course. But as we will
335 hear today, other companies, especially manufacturers of some
336 electric vehicles, no longer include AM receivers in their
337 vehicles. And as a result, an increasing number of Americans
338 lack access to AM radio. And that is why I am pleased that
339 we are holding this hearing to discuss draft legislation that
340 would ensure all Americans continue to be able to access AM
341 radio stations from their cars.

342 The discussion draft we are considering today would
343 address this problem by requiring vehicle manufacturers to
344 install equipment to receive AM radio signals in all
345 passenger cars made or sold in the United States at no extra
346 cost to consumers. And I want to thank Chairs Rodgers and
347 Bilirakis and Ranking Member Schakowsky for working with me
348 on a bipartisan basis to hold this hearing.

349 I am encouraged by the discussion draft that we will
350 consider today, and I look forward to working together to
351 ensure that all Americans have access to AM radio in their
352 vehicles.

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353 [The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

354

355 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

356

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357 *Mr. Pallone. And with that, Chairman Bilirakis, I
358 yield back the balance of my time. Thank you.

359 *Mr. Bilirakis. The gentleman yields back. Thank you
360 so very much. And we have _ I believe Representative Dunn
361 has some stories with regard to Hurricane Michael in the
362 Panhandle and those rural areas. So thank you for bringing
363 that up. So very important.

364 All right, our first witness is Gary Shapiro, CEO of the
365 Consumer Technology Association.

366 You are recognized, sir.

367

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368 STATEMENT OF GARY SHAPIRO, CEO, CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY
369 ASSOCIATION; MELODY SPANN-COOPER, CHAIR AND CEO, MIDWAY
370 BROADCASTING CORPORATION; JOHN BOZZELLA, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
371 ALLIANCE FOR AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION; AND JUSTIN AHASTEEN,
372 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NAVAJO NATION

373

374 STATEMENT OF GARY SHAPIRO

375

376 *Mr. Shapiro. Thank you, Chairs Bilirakis and Rodgers,
377 and Ranking Members Schakowsky and Pallone, and members of
378 the subcommittee.

379 I appear today with one key message: American
380 consumers, not radio broadcasters, should decide what
381 entertainment technologies belong in their cars.

382 We began 100 years ago this month. We were called the
383 Radio Manufacturers Association, and that whole purpose was
384 to foster the growth of AM radio, this new technology. On
385 principle, though, since then we do not ask government to
386 fund our industry or mandate our products. We believe that
387 the marketplace, not government, should determine what
388 technologies thrive and which technologies grow.

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389 That is why we oppose this legislation. We don't
390 believe it is an appropriate role of Congress to mandate the
391 inclusion of a century-old technology in 21st century cars.
392 It is especially inappropriate in the service of an industry
393 that uses public spectrum that it received for free.

394 We have repeatedly urged broadcasters over the last 30
395 or 40 years to invest in new technology for AM that would
396 improve its sound quality and would have expanded their
397 market share. The response, honestly, has been
398 underwhelming.

399 Of course we know and have just heard that many
400 Americans do still listen to AM radio for sports, news, talk
401 radio, and cultural and non-English programming. But even
402 without this legislation, most car models, especially those
403 with gas-powered engines and models popular in rural areas,
404 will offer analogue AM radio. Where consumers want AM radio,
405 they will get it. And that is the market at work.

406 Given this reality, I am especially concerned how this
407 mandate would hurt American innovation. The stakes are
408 particularly high for EV makers, an area where Congress has
409 devoted billions of dollars to help out that industry. EV

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410 car makers are _ can somewhat reduce the static noise through
411 techniques like shielding and fully redesigning their cars.
412 But these techniques actually add costs and weight and force
413 design tradeoffs, limiting consumers' _ the car makers',
414 rather, ability to innovate in other areas.

415 Now, some EV makers provide access to AM radio using
416 technologies which are newer, and they also support streaming
417 services and satellite radio. They offer access to AM and FM
418 stations free of charge, and they avoid issues with
419 interference. This is a good compromise, and this is
420 digital, although not analogue.

421 Congressional action actually does affect our
422 competitive nature and how innovative we are as a country,
423 especially this committee. Our car makers compete for market
424 share globally, and every new mandate adds a burden and puts
425 American businesses at a disadvantage. We do want _ we don't
426 want to be Europe, where burdensome regulations kneecap the
427 growth of promising technology companies. In fact, we lead
428 with tech companies by far in the world.

429 This committee should also review the actual safety
430 arguments made by the NAB. Today emergency alerts are shared

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431 with the public through many different channels, including
432 digital radio, FM radio, Internet-based radio, satellite
433 radio, and cellular networks, as well as Internet-based
434 notifications and smartphone alerts.

435 It is no secret that FEMA knows that radio is declining,
436 and the NAB's relentless quest for this unprecedented mandate
437 of mandating an old technology just shows how weak AM radio
438 has become. In fact, we did a study following the October 23
439 test of the Emergency Alert System. It found that 95 percent
440 of American adults received that emergency alert versus via
441 their phone. Only one percent heard it from AM radio.

442 Effective policy-making does require accurate facts and
443 data. There is no data here. There is no data showing that
444 they will have an impact on FEMA's mission. And since the
445 original version of this bill, FEMA has asked for a
446 government study on how AM radio and multiple other
447 technologies help or hurt emergency alerting. Yet the bill,
448 as drafted, requires a mandate and then a study.

449 Now, claims that car makers are seeking somehow to
450 stifle religious and talk radio, or diversity of thought and
451 multilingual programs are simply not true. Car makers have a

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452 very specific interest, and that is to give consumers what
453 they want. Automakers are agnostic about whether their
454 customers listen to Sean Hannity or Taylor Swift. They just
455 want to sell innovative and safe vehicles.

456 And speaking of Taylor Swift, AM and FM are the only
457 forms of radio that do not pay performers for their work, yet
458 digital and streaming platforms pay performance royalties.
459 AM and FM radio use music to build their audience, allowing
460 broadcasters to make billions in revenue from advertising
461 while paying nothing to performers. This is disturbing,
462 given over 240 million songs are played on AM radio every
463 year. And as legislators in Congress have rightly pointed
464 out, the United States is the only democratic nation in the
465 world where artists are not compensated for use of their
466 songs on AM or FM radio. Mandating AM radio would reward
467 this and condone this unfair system, allowing the broadcast
468 industry to reap profits at the expense of artists.

469 Now, broadcasters have repeatedly pushed Congress for
470 laws to preserve their struggling business model. First, it
471 was a rather absurd attempt to mandate FM chips in mobile
472 phones. Now broadcasters are using the same playbook for AM

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473 radio. And actually, under the logic that we hear, there
474 should be a mandate for AM radio in every home, every
475 classroom, every hotel room, and every retail store. That is
476 what a lot of these examples are applied to. And Congress
477 should resist this industry bailout and let consumers make
478 the purchase decisions that align with their preferences.

479 Today the market is working as intended. Consumers have
480 a choice and they should have a choice in the future. Thank
481 you very much for this opportunity to testify.

482 [The prepared statement of Mr. Shapiro follows:]

483

484 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

485

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486 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you sir. I appreciate it. The
487 gentleman yields back.

488 Our first witness is _ our second witness is Melody
489 Spann-Cooper, chair and CEO of the Midway Broadcasting
490 Corporation.

491 You are recognized.

492

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493 STATEMENT OF MELODY SPANN-COOPER

494

495 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Thank you. Good morning, Chairs

496 Rodgers and Bilirakis _

497 *Mr. Bilirakis. Good morning.

498 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. _ Ranking Members Pallone and

499 Schakowsky from the great State of Illinois, and

500 distinguished members of the subcommittee. My name is Melody

501 Spann-Cooper. I have the honor of serving as the chairwoman

502 and CEO of Midway Broadcasting Corporation, Chicago's only

503 Black and female-owned broadcasting company. Today I proudly

504 testify on behalf of the National Association of Broadcasters

505 and thousands of free, over-the-air AM radio stations that

506 serve your constituents across these United States.

507 Your legislation to preserve AM radio in vehicles is

508 critical. Every month over 82 million Americans tune in to

509 AM radio for news, entertainment, sports, and emergency

510 information. Over 15,000 radio stations operate in the

511 United States, providing content to Americans for free on a

512 daily basis. Of those, nearly 4,500 are AM radio stations.

513 Midway operates two of these stations, the legendary

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514 WVON 1690 AM. The Talk of Chicago is the oldest Black-
515 oriented radio station in Chicago and has an urban talk
516 format. WRLD 1450 AM, La Voz de la Comunidad Latina, is
517 Chicago's home for Hispanic independent broadcasters. After
518 61 years, WVON has never strayed from our mission of
519 providing live, local, and trusted content that empowers and
520 educates Chicago's thriving, diverse communities. We have
521 stayed true to the reason the FCC granted our license, which
522 is to serve the public.

523 Our AM stations in Chicago are vital for many reasons,
524 not the least of which is our social impact. One of many
525 examples of our partnership with Cook County _ is our
526 partnership with Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas.
527 Treasurer Pappas hosts a weekly segment that offers refunds
528 to Cook County homeowners who have overpaid their property
529 taxes. Thanks to this program, the treasurer has returned
530 \$300 million to taxpayers.

531 AM outlets all over the country have similar stories of
532 how they serve communities. AM radio is a resilient lifeline
533 during public safety emergencies. To put it as simply as I
534 can, the most foremost reason that Congress should care about

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535 AM radio is that it is a lifesaver. No other communications
536 medium has the reach or resiliency of AM radio. A single
537 station can be heard as far as 700 miles away. The signal
538 cuts through buildings and mountains and remote areas where
539 no cell signal or FM station can be found. AM is there.
540 When the power goes out, radio stations can still be found on
541 battery or crank radios or in your car. Broadcasters partner
542 with the Department of Homeland Security to provide emergency
543 information to the public. Americans also receive these
544 alerts on TV, satellite, radio, and cell phones.

545 However, we have seen in recent times how delicate our
546 communications infrastructure can be. Just this past
547 February tens of thousands of mobile users lost service for
548 hours, and it was a major national story. Our country has
549 experienced national disasters, terrorist attacks during
550 which many means of communication were unavailable. When the
551 power goes out and cell towers go down, Americans can depend
552 on radio to provide them the emergency information they need.

553 Additionally, 77 radio stations, a vast majority of
554 those being AM, serve as primary entry point, or PEP,
555 stations, PEP stations. PEP stations are equipped to

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556 continue broadcasting information under all conditions. To
557 put a finer point on it, these stations are still on the air
558 when literally everything else goes down. Lives have been
559 saved thanks to this network, and emergencies like the
560 catastrophic wildfires in Washington State, Hurricanes Sandy,
561 Ian, and Maria, or the tornadoes that just struck the Midwest
562 last weekend and are headed there again in the next couple of
563 days, radio is the most reliable source of information
564 Americans have access to.

565 Support for this bill ranges from FEMA, DoT, and the FCC
566 to over 75 organizations representing all stripes of
567 Americans. I wish I had time here to list them all. But
568 when 247 bipartisan Members of the House and 60 Senators have
569 cosponsored legislation, the case is compelling.

570 In conclusion, Americans need fact-based, reliable
571 information before, during, and after emergency events. Time
572 and time again, AM radio is that critical lifeline. The
573 Federal Government has a long history of advancing public
574 safety in automobiles, from seat belts to airbags to back-up
575 cameras. Cameras should _ Congress should do the same here,
576 ensuring Americans' continued access to emergency information

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577 through their car radios for _ as a safety feature.

578 I commend this committee for advancing this important
579 legislation, and look forward to its passing. Thank you for
580 your time today.

581 [The prepared statement of Ms. Spann-Cooper follows:]

582

583 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

584

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585 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you very much for your testimony.

586 Now I will call on our next witness, John Bozzella, president

587 and CEO of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation.

588 You are recognized, sir, for five minutes.

589

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590 STATEMENT OF JOHN BOZZELLA

591

592 *Mr. Bozzella. Chair Bilirakis, Ranking Member
593 Schakowsky, members of the committee, my name is John
594 Bozzella. I am the president and CEO of Alliance for
595 Automotive Innovation. Thanks for the invitation to testify
596 today and to share my perspective on legislation that would
597 require automakers to install analogue AM radio in all
598 vehicles. We oppose this legislation, and let me explain
599 why.

600 First, requiring analogue AM radio in vehicles is not
601 necessary to ensure public safety.

602 Second, it is an intervention by Congress to support a
603 particular business model. In this case, advertising-
604 supported analogue AM broadcasting.

605 And finally, it creates a troubling precedent at the
606 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

607 Let me start with some context. There are 286 million
608 vehicles on U.S. roads today. The average age? More than 12
609 years. Ninety-nine percent of those vehicles have analogue
610 AM radio. Even if every automaker discontinued analogue AM

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611 radio starting at this moment, it would take more than 30
612 years for the fleet of vehicles to turn over and analogue AM
613 radio to fully phase out.

614 A handful of automakers have announced plans to stop
615 including analogue AM radio in vehicles. Why? Customer
616 research suggests that drivers rarely listen to analogue AM
617 radio in vehicles anymore. Today they have lots of options
618 to get news and entertainment while driving: Internet-based
619 radio, streaming and satellite radio, as well as digital AM
620 and FM radio.

621 What about electric vehicles, which are about one
622 percent of vehicles on the road today? EVs and AM radio,
623 especially analogue AM radio, don't always mix. The high
624 voltage electrical systems in EVs generate electromagnetic
625 interference that, according to the Center for Automotive
626 Research, "distorts AM radio signals, affecting the listening
627 experience for drivers and passengers." In other words,
628 really staticky. It is not possible to eliminate that
629 interference, and techniques to reduce interference add
630 weight and mess with battery range, and would cost an
631 estimated \$3.8 billion.

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632 When we are talking about a small universe of vehicles
633 and a transition that will stretch 30-plus years, ask
634 yourself, what is this legislation trying to solve for? Why
635 do this now? What is the rush?

636 A few weeks ago I was on the road, not tuned to AM
637 radio, when my phone and dashboard blared with an alert. An
638 earthquake occurred in New Jersey. I am guessing many of us
639 received the same alert on our mobile phones. Luckily,
640 nobody was hurt, but this was a real-world example of a
641 potential natural disaster while driving, the exact scenario
642 analogue AM radio mandate supporters say makes this bill
643 essential.

644 So what happens if a tornado or hurricane knocks out
645 cell phone service while you are in a vehicle?

646 First, automakers will continue to make alerts from
647 FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, IPAWS,
648 available inside the vehicle on all platforms, and _ this is
649 important _ those alerts will be available even if drivers
650 don't subscribe to certain technologies. IPAWS alerts will
651 be delivered at no cost to customers for free.

652 Second, so customers can make informed decisions,

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653 automakers support a clear disclosure if a vehicle doesn't
654 include analog AM radio.

655 Third, if customers request it, automakers would support
656 including an emergency portable AM radio in new vehicles that
657 don't have analogue AM radio, similar to the first aid or
658 tire kits in new vehicles today.

659 And because this transition will take 30 years, Congress
660 has time to ask the GAO to study the issue and understand
661 where analogue AM radio fits into the government's overall
662 emergency alert protocols. These are reasonable ways to
663 address AM radio during emergencies, but stop short of full-
664 blown government requirements.

665 Finally, the question of precedent. Congress created
666 NHTSA to be the country's traffic safety watchdog. The
667 agency issues Federal motor vehicle safety standards to
668 reduce and prevent vehicle crashes, airbags, anti-lock
669 brakes, emergency stability control, seat belts. Lifesaving
670 vehicle technology mandated by NHTSA after careful study of
671 consumer acceptance and a rulemaking process with a cost
672 benefit analysis: that is completely missing from this
673 debate. Instead, Congress is opening a new space for NHTSA

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674 to mandate vehicle equipment, any kind of equipment, that
675 falls outside the vehicle safety lane. NHTSA should be a
676 vehicle safety agency and an agency with boundaries. You
677 could like AM radio mandates today, but you might not like
678 the next equipment requirement from a future Congress under
679 this authority.

680 Thank you. I am happy to take your questions.

681 [The prepared statement of Mr. Bozzella follows:]

682

683 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

684

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

685 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you very much. Our next witness
686 is Justin Ahasteen _ I hope I pronounced that right _ the
687 executive director of the Navajo Nation office, the
688 Washington office.

689 You are recognized, sir, for your testimony. Five
690 minutes, please.

691

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692 STATEMENT OF JUSTIN AHASTEEN

693

694 *Mr. Ahasteen. [Speaking native language] Chairman
695 Bilirakis, Ranking Member Schakowsky, and distinguished
696 members of the subcommittee. [Speaking native language.]

697 I serve as the executive director of the Navajo Nation
698 Washington office, representing the President of the Navajo
699 Nation, Dr. Buu Van Nygren. And he would like me to carry
700 this message and remind everyone in the room that the United
701 States, in accordance with tribal treaties, has a duty to
702 ensure the safety and welfare of Native Americans in
703 perpetuity with the treaties that we have signed.

704 Access to reliable communication channels is a critical
705 aspect of public safety, democracy, and community cohesion.
706 For the Navajo Nation, AM radio has been and continues to be
707 a vital lifeline that is woven through the fabric of our
708 daily lives. In 1986 the Navajo Nation Council established
709 KTNN, also known as the Voice of the Navajo Nation, to serve
710 as the primary radio broadcaster for the Navajo people. Our
711 one core motivation in starting the new radio station was to
712 ensure Navajo elders, who had limited English proficiency,

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713 could receive important community announcements in the Navajo
714 language.

715 The Navajo Nation is large. Our reservation covers over
716 27,000 square miles, which is roughly the size of West
717 Virginia, and our most remote residents are the most likely
718 to communicate primarily in Navajo, necessitating the need
719 for this radio service. For that reason, the decision from
720 the beginning was to build KTNN as an AM station to ensure
721 the signal reached as many Navajo citizens as possible.

722 The FCC authorized KTNN to launch one of the last 500
723 watt stations on a clear channel in the United States. Now,
724 nearly every corner of the Navajo Nation can access KTNN
725 during the day, and on a clear night you can tune in from
726 regular car radios from as far as Salt Lake City or Los
727 Angeles. That is the power of AM radio.

728 As this committee is aware, there are some significant
729 differences between AM and FM radio signals. From a
730 technological perspective, the difference is simple: AM
731 varies the amplitude of the signal, whereas FM varies the
732 frequency. But the results are substantially different in
733 terms of quality and reach. It is no secret that FM stations

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734 sound better. Most motorists, myself included, prefer
735 listening to FM station, if given the option. That is one
736 reason KTNN also broadcast over FM. But even under the best
737 of circumstances, FM stations can only broadcast out about 60
738 miles, and that is assuming you don't have a mountain in the
739 way. This works great in the suburbs, but it becomes
740 impractical when driving in places like the Navajo Nation.

741 The KTNN FM signal doesn't extend much beyond Window
742 Rock area, but the AM signal, though of lower sound quality,
743 reaches across the entire Navajo Nation, nearly all 27,000
744 square miles. We would have to build dozens of radio towers
745 across the Navajo Nation in order to get the kind of coverage
746 with FM stations, which is economically impractical. The
747 only real solution is AM radio.

748 AM radio is not just for entertainment. Our people rely
749 on AM radio for public safety updates. During an emergency,
750 like the derailment that shut down Interstate 40 at the
751 Arizona-New Mexico border this past week, AM radio allows our
752 people to be warned of the danger before they have driven
753 into it. A Navajo elder driving _ traveling 120 miles from
754 Kayenta to Window Rock can be warned of a flash flood that is

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755 occurring in Chinle through an AM station and allowing them
756 to plan an alternate route before it is too late. FM
757 stations don't provide consistent coverage for the most part
758 of that journey, and cell service is spotty at best.

759 Satellite options like Sirius Radio are not only cost
760 prohibitive, but they ignore local and regional issues that
761 affect Navajo drivers and don't broadcast in the Navajo
762 language.

763 Additionally, the Navajo Nation radio station is crucial
764 for providing emergency alerts through the public _ through a
765 daisy chain system, ensuring that messages reach even the
766 most remote and rural areas within our reservation.

767 The far-reaching capabilities of AM transmitters, along
768 with their resilience, are why our most remote communities
769 across the reservation exclusively use and rely on AM radio
770 to stay informed with current world and local news in the
771 Navajo language. That is why the Navajo Nation supports this
772 bill. Lifesaving information and public information should
773 be readily accessible and not dependent solely on cellular
774 networks, broadband, or satellite subscription-based
775 services.

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776 In closing, I implore the members of this subcommittee
777 to recognize the unique and indispensable role that AM radio
778 plays for the Navajo people. As we work to bridge the
779 digital divide, we cannot afford to undermine the existing
780 tools that serve our community so effectively. Please
781 consider the lifeline that AM radio represents to the Navajo
782 Nation and other rural communities across America, and work
783 with us to ensure that we will continue to have this
784 accessible to everyone.

785 Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am open
786 to answer any questions the subcommittee may have. [Speaking
787 in native language.] Thank you.

788 [The prepared statement of Mr. Ahasteen follows:]

789

790 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

791

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792 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you, Mr. Ahasteen.

793 So now thank you very much, all of you, for your
794 testimony. I will begin the questioning and recognize myself
795 for five minutes.

796 First of all, in Florida, category 4 or 5 hurricanes
797 like Hurricane Ian or the one that I mentioned earlier,
798 Hurricane Michael in the panhandle area of Florida, are
799 unfortunately not uncommon. It is not an uncommon
800 occurrence. And I know they are forecasting that the
801 hurricane season will be pretty heavy. Hopefully, that won't
802 happen, God forbid, anywhere in the United States.

803 In the immediate aftermath of a storm, or in the hours
804 leading up to one, access to AM radio can be lifesaving, as
805 you said. There may be no electricity or cell signal
806 available. Despite being a 100-year-old technology, AM radio
807 is still a critical way for people to get information. No
808 one can dispute that.

809 Ms. Spann-Cooper, can you talk about how you have used
810 AM radio in critical moments to disperse public safety
811 information?

812 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Yes. Thank you for your inquiry.

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813 And you are 110 percent correct. It is so important. I
814 think we are in the middle of the country, right, and so we
815 don't get as many tornadoes and storms as some other places
816 have. But we had a tornado that touched down in Plainfield
817 not long ago, right?

818 And the important thing about AM radio and not just
819 alerting people of storms, it is the fact that we are there
820 before, during, and after these storms. Think about in
821 Florida, and I am sure some of our AM stations serve your
822 area the same way, Congressman. When you have things that
823 are needed afterwards, homeland security, FEMA, things that
824 _ information that people use when cell phones are down, when
825 a lot of these towers come down, we are the broadcasters that
826 is delivering that information. And so that is what makes it
827 important.

828 People talk about the alerts and people telling you
829 where something is happening. We alerted you. But often
830 times, when you see that on your cell phone, do you know what
831 they are telling you? Turn on your local broadcaster. So
832 they are leading you back to us in order for us and our team
833 to give you the vital information that you need before,

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834 during, and after. That is why AM radio continues to be the
835 backbone, especially in cases of emergencies, to serve these
836 communities.

837 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you very much. And I know I
838 don't have a lot of time, but the Chicago station that you
839 referred to earlier _

840 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Yes.

841 *Mr. Bilirakis. _ is that available on an FM station,
842 the content?

843 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. No.

844 *Mr. Bilirakis. It is not available?

845 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. No, we are two AM stations, analogue
846 stations that are there.

847 But when emergencies happen, it is important that
848 everyone understands we are a PEP station. We have a PEP
849 station in our market, WLS. So if something happens and the
850 President needs to reach people, 90 percent of it is done
851 through the PEP stations. Ours in Chicago, Congressman, is
852 WLS, which sends the signals down to a station like WVON, so
853 we can reach our constituents.

854 The country has done a wonderful job of shoring up the

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855 priority entry points _ that is what they are called _ for
856 everybody to be able to reach this information. And so that
857 is what we use. But by far, analogue carrying the message
858 before, during, and after is where we really excel.

859 *Mr. Bilirakis. Okay. Thank you very much.

860 Mr. Ahasteen, your community is largely based in rural
861 areas, and I appreciated hearing your testimony on AM's
862 importance. Would you like to share your perspective on the
863 reliability of AM radio, particularly in times of emergency?

864 And you did say that some of the content is available on
865 FM stations, but it is not far reaching. And you are
866 representing the Navajo _ I can't even _ I am sorry, the _
867 yes, the entire nation.

868 So, in any case, go ahead and elaborate on that, if you
869 can, please.

870 *Mr. Ahasteen. Thank you, Chairman. So, I mean, the
871 emergency notification systems, whether they go out and they
872 are produced, I think there is one critical element that is
873 missing from that, and that is being able to communicate the
874 actual emergency in the native language. And that is
875 something that, you know, a lot of these stations don't have,

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876 but that is what makes AM unique because we have KTNN, which
877 again, is the Voice of the Navajo Nation, and that would be
878 able to communicate specific dangers in our native language.

879 We are not talking about just the dangers, but, you
880 know, we are talking about weather alerts. You know, growing
881 up on the Navajo Nation, my mother used to wake up at 5:00 in
882 the morning on a snow day, go into the car, warm it up, and
883 she would listen for about an hour on weather alerts because
884 cellular reception and other things that most Americans have
885 access to is not a reality on the Navajo Nation. We have
886 areas that don't even have electricity or running water, let
887 alone broadband services. So AM radio is something that
888 people really rely on, and not everyone can afford a little
889 radio within the stores, so they utilize what is available to
890 them.

891 And there was a comment mentioned that, you know, within
892 the 12 years or so, you know, cars will be phasing out.
893 Well, I don't think that really takes into account the
894 terrain and the locality of our reservation, where we go
895 through cars every three years or so because cars are not
896 equipped to handle the terrain that we live in. Most of our

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897 roads are unpaved. We have to travel through mud. We have
898 to travel through _ and it causes additional wear and tear on
899 vehicles.

900 So vehicles are a lifeline. And if vehicles that are
901 available on market don't have AM radio within them, we are
902 setting our people up for failure and potentially causing a
903 public safety crisis worse than it already is on the Navajo
904 Nation.

905 *Mr. Bilirakis. Yes, thank you very much, and I
906 apologize for mispronouncing Navajo Nation.

907 Now we will go to the ranking member and recognize her
908 for five minutes of her _ five minutes for questioning.

909 *Ms. Schakowsky. Well, I want to take a moment just to
910 welcome Melody Spann-Cooper, who is well known in the Chicago
911 area. And, of course, WGN is _ no. WVON is famous in
912 Chicago, and she is a truly great entrepreneur in the field
913 of broadcast. And AM is very, very important.

914 And we have been talking a lot about the safety issues,
915 but I wanted you to talk about, like, WVON and others _ you
916 have two stations _ what they mean in terms of the community
917 and the connection that your stations have to bring the

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918 community together.

919 And I just want to say that when it comes to women and
920 Blacks and Latinas often are under-represented, I think, and
921 AM becomes very important.

922 If you could, talk about the community.

923 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Sure. Thank you so much.

924 Our station went on the air 61 years ago, April 1, 1963,
925 as the WVON, the Voice of the Negro. That is in its call
926 letters. And for the past 61 years, that is what we have
927 been, a vital voice in Chicago representing its Black
928 constituents.

929 And how do we serve them? Sure, we do entertainment,
930 but we also _ we do caregiver seminars. We do senior
931 breakfasts. I was so honored to help Congresswoman Robin
932 Kelly with a campaign that she was doing on maternal
933 mortality. She called, and we were able to drive that
934 message for her. That is the value of these stations.

935 And you find them down the dial, Congresswoman
936 Schakowsky, whether it is sports, whether it is religion _ I
937 think about _ Dennis Lyle is here with me from the IBA. That
938 is our big story in Chicago, because in Illinois, you know,

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939 Chicago is the center of the universe. But it is really not
940 to the farmers who are downstate. It is not to people who
941 like conservative talk radio who might live in Effingham or
942 may live in Mound City.

943 And so what AM has done and what we do at our stations
944 and what I am so excited that we are now doing for our Latino
945 community of Chicago, who is just thriving, is giving them an
946 authentic voice to deal with those things that matter to
947 them. That is what the FCC has given us these licenses for,
948 is to serve communities.

949 And, you know, you hear a lot of chatter around AM. I
950 don't feel that way. I am excited about AM. I am excited
951 about the dialogue we are able to have with these
952 communities, and that we are able to serve and offer
953 services, and really show what our great nation is about in
954 terms of its diversity and its voices. I have got 43 people
955 who work with me, and we don't spend a lot of time talking
956 about AM going out of business. We talk about AM and its
957 connections to new technology and how we reach another
958 generation of folks.

959 So I am not humdrum. I think it is a perfect _ it is a

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960 tremendous entree, foray for people who want to get in this
961 business. Imagine my father having the opportunity to leave
962 me this. So I am excited about AM radio. I don't just have
963 the same gloom and doom. I am sorry, fellas, but _

964 [Laughter.]

965 *Ms. Schakowsky. So briefly, I know you were talking
966 about the next generation, but I want to talk about _ because
967 I focus a lot on older Americans. Older Americans are
968 important for your _ the people who listen to _

969 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Yes.

970 *Ms. Schakowsky. _ Talk a little, talk about what you
971 do for them.

972 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Yes, thank you for that. Of course,
973 when you have a legacy station that is 61 years old, the
974 people have grown old with it, right? And we do. We offer
975 services on Medicaid, Medicare. They get conversations about
976 this, about their health care, about their Social Security.
977 We do a senior breakfast. I feed 1,000 senior citizens once
978 a year. It is crazy. The seniors are just different. They
979 dance, they get their blood pressure taken. This is the work
980 that we do, caregiving workshops, education around banking.

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981 And not only seniors, Congresswoman. There is handicap-
982 accessible people who rely on us, right? I have had people
983 call our station and say, "What time is it?"` `

984 *Ms. Schakowsky. Can I stop you for just a second _

985 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Yes, sure.

986 *Ms. Schakowsky. _ because I do want to ask Mr.

987 Ahasteen.

988 Are you are you basically saying that, without AM, for
989 many people in your community, in your tribe, that there will
990 not be the communication?

991 *Mr. Ahasteen. That is exactly what I am saying,
992 Ranking Member. Broadband connectivity, even cellular
993 connection on the Navajo Nation is difficult.

994 There are areas on the nation that do have broadband.
995 There are areas that have cellular connections. But
996 traveling through the nation, for the most part, I would say
997 about 70 percent of the nation doesn't have access to these
998 simple tools. And that is something that we are working to
999 change. But it really doesn't help when a lot of the tools
1000 that we are dependent on to bridge the digital divide are
1001 being taken away.

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1002 And one example specifically is I don't think that there
1003 has been reauthorization of the Affordable Connectivity
1004 Program that just gives Navajo people an opportunity to
1005 invest and obtain some of the equipment that is necessary
1006 even just to connect to some of the services that are being
1007 offered.

1008 *Ms. Schakowsky. My time is up, but I wanted to make
1009 that point. Thank you. I appreciate you. And the
1010 reauthorization is important.

1011 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you. I recognize now the chair
1012 of the full committee, Mrs. Rodgers, for her five minutes of
1013 questioning.

1014 *The Chair. I have long expressed concerns with the
1015 government mandating specific obligations for the private
1016 sector. However, we are at a moment where Congress's hand is
1017 being forced to intervene when corporations are choosing not
1018 to do what is in the best interest of the American people.

1019 In the case of AM radio, it is the auto industry. But
1020 sadly, we are seeing this in other instances, as well.
1021 Another example is with Big Tech failing to protect the
1022 personal information of American people, instead choosing to

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1023 exploit and monetize people's personal information. That is
1024 why we are working to enact a comprehensive data privacy and
1025 security law, and ensure that people have the right to
1026 privacy and control over their information.

1027 I hope the takeaway from this hearing today for all
1028 companies is that they need to be thoughtful stewards of
1029 their products and balance innovating with what is best for
1030 consumers. And for today's hearing that means how we
1031 preserve AM radio going forward.

1032 Ms. Spann-Cooper, we appreciate you being here and
1033 providing your expertise on how residents in the Chicago area
1034 rely on your programming for diverse and reliable information.
1035 I wanted to ask, if AM radios were removed from vehicles in
1036 the future, what effect will this have on the Americans who
1037 rely on these types of programs?

1038 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Thank you so much for your question.
1039 It would be a devastating effect on those that rely. They
1040 would be without a direct contact to vital information for
1041 their respective communities. It would _ and _ but _ and
1042 more importantly, AM would just go away, and how unfortunate
1043 would that be, that you wouldn't be able to serve

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1044 communities, that you would take something away that, number
1045 one, not only entertains, but is for safety purposes and more
1046 reliable than any of the sources that are available now? And
1047 it would just go away.

1048 *The Chair. Thank you.

1049 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. And as great stewards, we shouldn't
1050 allow that to happen.

1051 *The Chair. Thank you.

1052 Mr. Ahasteen, we have federally-recognized tribes in the
1053 State of Washington, as well, and I appreciate you being here
1054 to share their voice. In your testimony you spoke of various
1055 tribes across the country investing in tribally-controlled
1056 stations to provide specific services to nations across the
1057 states. How would removing AM radios from vehicles impact
1058 the Navajo Nation?

1059 And are there concerns that voices would be silenced or
1060 access to lifesaving public safety information would be lost?

1061 *Mr. Ahasteen. That is a very real reality, and that is
1062 why the Navajo Nation is concerned about these steps to
1063 removing AM radio from vehicles.

1064 As I have stated in my testimony, broadband connectivity

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1065 is very sparse. Cellular connections is very sparse across
1066 the nation. The only real reliable source is AM radio. And
1067 if folks are driving, they are not going to get a flash flood
1068 warning on their cell phones. One, because the cell phone
1069 that they probably have is not the latest and greatest
1070 smartphone. And then the second issue is, if it is dependent
1071 upon cellular connectivity, you are just not going to receive
1072 that because the signals are not there. So there is no way
1073 you can push notifications so you are intentionally driving
1074 into a hazard.

1075 *The Chair. Thank you. How would you respond to those
1076 saying AM radio can still be accessed by those even without
1077 vehicles?

1078 *Mr. Ahasteen. Well, I don't know how or what tools are
1079 going to be made available. For instance, satellite radio,
1080 there is usually _ in order to even get satellite radio in
1081 vehicles, you have to pay for a subscription. And that is
1082 just cost prohibitive for a lot of our members. We are
1083 talking about an area that has about less than \$20,000 in
1084 annual household income. So to expect people to purchase
1085 additional tools just to receive basic public information, I

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1086 think, is not in the best interest of our people.

1087 *The Chair. Thank you.

1088 Mr. Bozzella, does the Alliance for Automotive
1089 Innovation support providing AM radio in vehicles for free?

1090 *Mr. Bozzella. AM radio is currently in vehicles for
1091 free. We have already committed and will continue to commit
1092 to make sure that emergency broadcast, especially the IPAWS
1093 system, which we are big believers in and support greatly,
1094 will always be available on multiple platforms for free.
1095 There will be no need for a subscription to hear an emergency
1096 broadcast.

1097 *The Chair. Okay, am I hearing for other broadcasts,
1098 though, that there would be a fee?

1099 *Mr. Bozzella. No, not at all. Ninety-nine percent of
1100 vehicles on the road today have analogue AM radio for free,
1101 and FM radio for free, and streaming services for free. That
1102 is going to continue. And I think over the next 30 years
1103 there may be a gradual increase in the number of vehicles
1104 that don't have analogue AM radio, and it _ because of
1105 significant interference with high tech safety and emission
1106 systems like EVs.

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1107 But I am telling you, if you look at the vehicles for
1108 sale today, over 90 percent of them have analogue AM radio in
1109 it. I think it is important, if customers want it, they can
1110 get it.

1111 *The Chair. Okay. Thank you. Thank you all.

1112 *Mr. Bozzella. Thank you.

1113 *The Chair. I yield back.

1114 *Mr. Bilirakis. All right, I thank the gentlelady, and
1115 now I will recognize the ranking member of the full
1116 committee, Mr. Pallone, for his five minutes of questioning.

1117 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Chairman Bilirakis. Let me
1118 just say that, again, that in emergency situations, the
1119 ability to send alerts and other information that reach as
1120 many people as possible as quickly as possible is essential
1121 to saving lives. And access to AM radio is critical, in my
1122 opinion, in an emergency, particularly for people when they
1123 are in their cars.

1124 And we have heard from critics of this bill, the draft
1125 bill, that access to AM radio in cars is not necessary to
1126 protect public health because other communication channels
1127 such as streaming, cell phone push notifications, or FM

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1128 stations are able to take the place of AM broadcasting.
1129 However, we know that in hurricanes, fires, floods, and other
1130 emergency situations, those communication networks are often
1131 unreliable.

1132 And redundancies in our nation's emergency alert system
1133 ensure that when disaster strikes American families can get
1134 public safety information. And AM radio is a crucial part of
1135 our nation's emergency alert system because of its unique
1136 reliability during natural and man-made disasters. Now, I
1137 have two questions of Ms. Cooper, and then I am going to ask
1138 Mr. Ahasteen a question. And some of this may have been
1139 discussed, so, you know, feel free to just add maybe to what
1140 you have already said.

1141 Can you discuss _ this is Ms. Spann-Cooper _ can you
1142 discuss why AM radio and stations like your own are a
1143 critical piece of the emergency alerting system, and how
1144 Midway Broadcasting collaborates with public officials to
1145 ensure your listeners receive up-to-the-minute alerts when
1146 they need them most, if you would?

1147 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Sure. Again, AM radio is the
1148 backbone of the Emergency Broadcasting System.

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1149 I know that you are from the great State of New Jersey,
1150 and you know what it was like when Superstorm Sandy came, and
1151 how devastating it was. Imagine cell towers down. Imagine
1152 the inability to reach some of the more technological spaces
1153 that we have now that is carrying. AM radio survives. Radio
1154 survives.

1155 Let's go to Maui for an example. Can you imagine that?
1156 And we all know the devastation of what happened in Maui.
1157 Because of our PEP station, we _ that was the only source of
1158 contact with people on that island. Because of radio, they
1159 were able to stay connected. And so that is what really
1160 shows the significance and the value of our EAS systems and
1161 stations like ours being able to connect.

1162 When you look at a city like Chicago, like I said, you
1163 don't have a lot. But you know when I think it was most
1164 effective? During COVID. During a pandemic, when there was
1165 not a lot of information, we were there before, during, and
1166 after, carrying messaging to people about unemployment, about
1167 _ the SBA was on our station. So that is what I think people
1168 miss.

1169 We think about alarm, and we think about emergencies,

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1170 and 30 seconds. It is not just 30 seconds for those that are
1171 in it. It is before, during, and after.

1172 *Mr. Pallone. But let me just ask you also about
1173 electric vehicles. How does removing analogue AM radio from
1174 electric vehicles make consumers less safe?

1175 And what are the long-term impacts this shift would have
1176 on ensuring Americans receive possible lifesaving
1177 information?

1178 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. You know, Congressman, interestingly
1179 enough, AM radio is already in 50 percent of EV vehicles. I
1180 don't know why it is so difficult to put it in the other 50
1181 percent.

1182 AM just didn't show up. It is in vehicles. I have an
1183 EV vehicle, and I have to tell you every other day they are
1184 sending me a new upgrade. What is so difficult about putting
1185 AM radio in electric vehicles? I think that is what needs to
1186 be answered, and I think understanding how important it is to
1187 our infrastructure that it should be in every vehicle.

1188 *Mr. Pallone. Well, thank you.

1189 Mr. Ahasteen, any additional hardships that members of
1190 the Navajo Nation face if AM broadcasting equipment was

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1191 removed?

1192 I know you have talked about it some. If you want to
1193 add to it, it is up to you.

1194 *Mr. Ahasteen. Thank you, Ranking Member. I mean, AM
1195 radio is literally just a lifeline for the Navajo people.
1196 That is all we have.

1197 Again, when we talk about broadband and the
1198 connectivity, it is difficult to get that even set up. We
1199 don't have the infrastructure in place to support that. But
1200 we do have AM radio, and that is how people get their news.

1201 You start taking away programs that invest into
1202 broadband, well, that is going to deepen the digital divide.
1203 If you start taking away our only accessible way to travel
1204 with AM radio, I am not sure what everyone else expects us to
1205 do to communicate with our folks, short of sending signals
1206 and carrier pigeons. And that is really a problem for us.

1207 You know, it is unique. I am not an expert on how
1208 vehicles are created, or what goes into the design and
1209 implementation of that. But I am an expert on being Native
1210 American, and I can tell you that the stark reality on the
1211 Navajo Nation is we are the one percent that is going to be

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1212 affected if AM radio is removed from cars, and that is, you
1213 know, just receiving basic information and public safety
1214 notices and updates.

1215 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you.

1216 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

1217 *Mr. Bilirakis. The gentleman yields back. Now I will
1218 recognize the vice chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. Walberg,
1219 for his five minutes of questioning.

1220 *Mr. Walberg. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to
1221 the panel for being here.

1222 AM radio is a vital community service. I am an avid
1223 listener and sometimes guest on our excellent local stations:
1224 WJR out of Detroit; WLEN, which is a FM station but local to
1225 my own hometown; WWJ, WKHM, WCSR. AM radio is some of the
1226 last truly local content available. And preserving consumer
1227 access to that content is necessary. Satellite certainly
1228 won't advertise local stores in my district.

1229 I am also a strong advocate for consumer choice. The
1230 customer should drive what companies do and what options they
1231 have for their products. And I know you all are listening.
1232 I have heard from many of my constituents, and they want to

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1233 continue having AM radio in their vehicles. I think we can
1234 find a solution _ at least I hope we can find a solution _
1235 that works for everyone, but remains flexible for the future,
1236 because the future is flexible.

1237 Ms. Spann-Cooper, my district is quite rural. I grew up
1238 in Chicago, but I am delighted to be living in a rural area
1239 now.

1240 [Laughter.]

1241 *Mr. Walberg. One of the biggest problems in many areas
1242 is not having a reliable Internet connection. Until we get
1243 connected, why is AM radio important to those communities,
1244 rural communities in particular?

1245 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Thank you for your question,
1246 Congressman.

1247 I think many of us assume that everybody lives in big
1248 cities like Chicago or _ and they don't. A wide swath of
1249 American people live in rural communities, where the
1250 technology infrastructure may not be there, where they are
1251 underserved. People assume that we all have big cell phones.
1252 We don't. And so AM radio serves those constituents. It is
1253 their lifeline.

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1254 And it is important to entertain them. Sports,
1255 religion, talk, information for communities is there. But in
1256 cases where there are storms and critical things that happen,
1257 it is the backbone of those communities in terms of being in
1258 connection with those constituents.

1259 *Mr. Walberg. Thank you. We all know that emergency
1260 alerts come through multiple devices. That is how they are
1261 supposed to work. My cell phone buzzes quite often. We are
1262 not always tuned into AM or FM radio, so the buzzing on our
1263 phones and TVs get our attention.

1264 Mr. Ahasteen, what role does AM radio play after those
1265 initial alerts? I am sure not all of your nation has flip
1266 phones, especially younger people. If the worst is to
1267 happen, and wireless and broadcast service was disrupted
1268 nationwide, how does AM offer resiliency in times of
1269 disaster?

1270 *Mr. Ahasteen. Thank you for that, Congressman.
1271 Really, I think I mentioned earlier, even if a notification
1272 is pushed through a phone, that notification is not being
1273 transmitted in our native language. And for a lot of our
1274 elders _

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1275 *Mr. Walberg. That is what I wanted you to say again.

1276 I mean, that is a very unique, unique situation.

1277 I have heard you talk about all of the rest of it, but
1278 that _ I wanted you to say that again, because a lot of us
1279 don't think that way. You know, I am not expecting to be
1280 hearing things in Swedish. I wouldn't understand it, anyway.

1281 [Laughter.]

1282 *Mr. Walberg. But a Navajo Nation? How you have
1283 explained it there, that is important to understand. Thank
1284 you.

1285 I want to find a long-term solution. NHTSA has created
1286 a lot. I am not sure we want to add to that without
1287 carefully thinking. Mr. Bozzella, I have experienced radio
1288 interference by just plugging in my cell phone into my car
1289 charger. Things are changing. What options are there to
1290 continue having full access to AM radio in vehicles,
1291 including those in times of emergency?

1292 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes. Thank you, Congressman.

1293 First, 99 percent or more of vehicles in the marketplace
1294 today and on the road today have analogue AM radio in them.
1295 So I think that is important to recognize: customers have

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1296 choices today.

1297 Beyond that, for the very few vehicles that maybe don't
1298 have analogue AM radio in them today, we are going to make
1299 sure that in front of any pay wall, and completely for free,
1300 that broadcast emergency alerts will come through.

1301 I want to also make sure you are aware and the committee
1302 is aware that we think customers should be notified at the
1303 point of sale about whether a car does have analogue AM radio
1304 so that a customer can make an informed choice.

1305 And third, for _ if customers want analogue AM radio,
1306 Ms. Spann-Cooper mentioned crank-and-battery radios. I think
1307 those are incredibly important in emergencies, where we are
1308 often told by FEMA to get out of the vehicle. Those types of
1309 products can be taken out of the vehicle in cases of
1310 emergency. And if customers want them, automakers are
1311 prepared to provide them in vehicles that don't have analogue
1312 AM radio in them.

1313 *Mr. Walberg. Thank you. My time is expired, but we
1314 will remember those commitments. Thank you.

1315 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you. I appreciate it very much.
1316 The gentleman yields back. Now I will recognize my fellow

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1317 Tampa Bay member. We work together on several issues,
1318 including this one.

1319 Ms. Castor, you are recognized for five minutes of
1320 questioning.

1321 *Ms. Castor. Well, thank you very much, Chair
1322 Bilirakis. Thank you for organizing this hearing.

1323 Thank you to the witnesses. Your testimony has been
1324 very illuminating.

1325 I think it is clear that AM radio is vital to our
1326 neighbors back home. It is not just the weather alerts and
1327 news and community updates, it is the entire package. And
1328 according to a Nielsen report that was published less than a
1329 year ago, radio continues to reach more American consumers
1330 than any other platform, linear or digital. It reaches 91
1331 percent of the U.S. population in a given month, including 91
1332 percent of our Black neighbors, 95 percent of our Hispanic
1333 neighbors.

1334 And I think a resource such as this should be protected.
1335 That is why I am proud to sponsor the Local Radio Freedom
1336 Act. It is a resolution that reaffirms Congress's support
1337 for local radio stations and opposes any new fees or taxes on

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1338 local free broadcast radio.

1339 Radio, as Chair Bilirakis has noted, it is particularly
1340 important to my neighbors in Florida. We rely on it for
1341 critical information during hurricanes. And Ms. Spann-
1342 Cooper, you have emphasized it is not just at that time of
1343 crisis, it is in the aftermath, dealing with it, that is so
1344 important.

1345 And as we _ you know, they think these storms are going
1346 to become even more intense. They are thinking of going to a
1347 category six. So I can't imagine that at this time we would
1348 go backwards in providing that important communications tool
1349 that you have called a lifesaver.

1350 In fact, this letter from seven former Federal Emergency
1351 Management Agency directors caught my eye on this. They say
1352 FEMA has spent millions of taxpayer dollars in creating and
1353 bolstering the National Public Warning System to communicate
1354 with the public during times of crisis. It is powered
1355 principally by AM radio because it is the only communication
1356 system with the reach and the resiliency to ensure that
1357 elected leaders and public safety officials can communicate
1358 with them _ with the public under the worst conditions.

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1359 So Ms. Spann-Cooper, talk to us again about how you all
1360 interact with our emergency management officials during a
1361 time of crisis and in the aftermath.

1362 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Thank you for the question,
1363 Congresswoman. Again, it is the Priority Entry Point
1364 stations, PEP stations. It is over 70 of them across the
1365 country.

1366 In Chicago, WLS, a 50,000-watt station. If the
1367 President needs to reach _ if something happens and he needs
1368 to reach the American people, within 10 minutes it is there.
1369 He is there. His message is going out. That station sends
1370 the information down to our station, right? And they are
1371 located throughout the country.

1372 The country did this following the terrorist attacks to
1373 shore up these stations to make sure they are the backbone of
1374 reaching 90 percent of Americans in case of an emergency.
1375 And so that is how it operates and how it falls down in order
1376 to reach stations across the country from this main big
1377 station in our area.

1378 *Ms. Castor. So some opponents of the legislation point
1379 to the test of the emergency alert system that took place

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1380 last October. During this test, which was conducted under
1381 normal, non-emergency conditions, only a small percentage of
1382 Americans reported receiving the alert through AM radio. In
1383 your view, would the same be true during an actual disaster,
1384 when Internet, power, and cell service may be down?

1385 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Well, the PEP stations kind of cover
1386 that.

1387 Listen, we are glad to see technology participate in
1388 this process. All hands have to be on deck when it comes to
1389 an emergency, right? But for them to sound an alarm to send
1390 them to your local broadcaster tells you and further supports
1391 our premise that AM radio, analogue radio, is important in
1392 times of emergencies. It is the most foolproof operation
1393 that you can have, Congresswoman. It is the backbone of the
1394 emergency system.

1395 *Ms. Castor. Thank you, I yield back.

1396 *Mr. Bilirakis. The gentlelady yields back. And now
1397 what we will do is we will take a recess. We have votes, and
1398 I think there are nine votes, so _ but they will probably
1399 have two-minute amendment votes, so it won't take too long.
1400 So we will reconvene 10 minutes after the last vote.

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1401 [Recess.]

1402 *Mr. Bilirakis. I will reconvene the hearing, and I am
1403 going to recognize _ Mr. Duncan from the great State of South
1404 Carolina, you are recognized for five minutes for your
1405 questioning.

1406 *Mr. Duncan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the chair of
1407 the Broadcaster Caucus, I am a proud cosponsor of legislation
1408 to ensure that all new vehicles in the United States continue
1409 to provide emergency service lifeline _ that is, AM radio.

1410 In my district AM radio is a source for Clemson
1411 football. Yay, Go Tigers.

1412 [Laughter.]

1413 *Mr. Duncan. Clemson radio, and Christian radio, and
1414 conservative talk radio. That is a pretty strong
1415 combination.

1416 I want to follow up on to Ms. Spann-Cooper on your
1417 answer to Ms. Schakowsky earlier, and just ask you, why are
1418 other communications media unable to replicate the reach and
1419 reliability of AM radio in times of emergency?

1420 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Thank you so much congressman, and
1421 thank you for sharing your role as chair of this.

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1422 I have got to say that what makes us special is the fact
1423 that we are live, local, and trusted. Live, local, and
1424 trusted, able to reach the people and communicate beyond
1425 alarm, beyond a warning, and really go the distance before,
1426 during, and after these catastrophes in order to reach the
1427 constituents.

1428 *Mr. Duncan. Thank you. Live, local, I love it.

1429 Mr. Ahasteen, I will just say this. I am not going to
1430 ask you a question, but I appreciate your testimony and
1431 perspective that you brought to this hearing. I want to
1432 shift gears and ask Mr. Shapiro.

1433 With that in mind, in an op ed you wrote after being
1434 trapped in California wildfires, you said this, and I am
1435 going to quote, "We make ourselves incredibly vulnerable by
1436 relying on tech without some redundancy, also known as back-
1437 up capabilities.'" In your recent advocacy you seem to be
1438 calling for the elimination of this redundancy. Are you now
1439 saying that we are not vulnerable by relying on only
1440 streaming?

1441 *Mr. Shapiro. Thank you so much for that question. I
1442 have been waiting for that. Any question, actually.

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1443 [Laughter.]

1444 *Mr. Shapiro. I appreciate that. You know, I do
1445 believe redundancy is important. Look, I have written 4
1446 books on innovation, over 100 articles. I speak around the
1447 world. We run the most innovation-focused event in the
1448 world. It is the largest business event there is. My life
1449 is about innovation. But to mandate any innovation, unless
1450 it is really for real safety purposes, I have a problem with.

1451 I believe in redundancy. That article, what I wrote
1452 there was about, first of all, it was about FM radio, and it
1453 was about the fact that you should have backups. I love the
1454 fact that there is _ the government says for emergency kits
1455 you should have a wind-up radio.

1456 But I do want to correct a couple of things. One is
1457 that AM is not that different than FM unless it is at night
1458 and the skies are clear. Then there is a different amount of
1459 coverage. So when we talk about FM and AM _ and I believe on
1460 the Navajo tribe there is FM radio broadcast, as well. So
1461 unless it is night time with clear weather, it is pretty much
1462 the same coverage. And that is just a physical fact.

1463 And the second thing is _

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1464 *Mr. Duncan. But all emergencies don't happen during
1465 bright, sunny days and morning and daylight hours.

1466 *Mr. Shapiro. You are absolutely correct, and that is
1467 why the average American has about six different technologies
1468 in their car to receive information and entertainment. And
1469 that is what I am saying.

1470 So there is multiple sources out there, and the right
1471 one may not be for that emergency. There is no source,
1472 including AM, that is going to be up all the time. There are
1473 satellites which has a national footprint. There is great _
1474 other great technologies which have the benefit of two-way
1475 communication, like CB radios, telephones, and family radios.
1476 Those are the type of things people should have in their
1477 cars.

1478 *Mr. Duncan. Let me _ in the interest of time, I
1479 appreciate that, but let me _ in the interest of time, you
1480 also went on to say, "We were only able to get a radio signal
1481 by going to the parking lot and listening to car radios. We
1482 were able to arrange an earlier bus by driving to the bus
1483 dispatch office. Every group and facility should have a
1484 portable, solar, hand-crank radio or a phone with a working

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1485 FM radio option. Smartphone manufacturers should consider
1486 making FM radio available on devices when technically
1487 feasible, and even promote and market as a safety feature for
1488 users.'`

1489 So why would you say that a smartphone should be allowed
1490 to have radio broadcasting, but not electric vehicles when
1491 Americans are already accustomed to AM in their cars, AM
1492 broadcasting is already a bedrock of Federal emergency
1493 management policy, and we have heard from the Navajo Nation
1494 there are areas _ I had property in Montana where you
1495 couldn't really get good coverage from a satellite that you
1496 talk about, but you always get the local AM radio station.

1497 So do you acknowledge that there are times and places
1498 when and where people cannot stream media in their vehicles,
1499 for whatever reason?

1500 *Mr. Shapiro. First of all, I want to make it clear I
1501 am not against AM radio. I think AM radio is great. I grew
1502 up with it. My favorite movie was Groundhog Day. But since
1503 that 30 years that that movie came out, where the radio is a
1504 central feature, the sales of AM radios have dropped _ non-
1505 vehicle, AM radios have dropped 80 percent. Consumers are

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1506 choosing _ not choosing that device. When I ask younger
1507 people about AM radio, they think I am talking about morning
1508 radio. They don't know what it is.

1509 And you are right, it is an older group and I am part of
1510 that group now, and I think that group is important. But _
1511 and I think AM radio is very important, and I am not going to
1512 give it up, but I want it to be my choice and not mandated,
1513 especially when you have multiple other choices out there
1514 that do almost precisely the same thing and, in some cases,
1515 better, in some cases not as good. That is all my point.

1516 *Mr. Duncan. My time is up, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

1517 *Mr. Walberg. [Presiding] The gentleman's time has
1518 expired. I am now pleased to give my colleague and friend
1519 from Michigan the opportunity for her five minutes of
1520 questioning.

1521 Mrs. Dingell.

1522 *Mrs. Dingell. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1523 Here, the reality is AM radio right now, old or young,
1524 remains a key part of our nation's emergency alert system,
1525 providing crucial support during times of crisis and proving
1526 its reliability when other networks fail.

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1527 As the automotive industry continues to evolve, we saw
1528 some announcements of some automakers to remove AM radios
1529 from their cars, raising significant concerns. Some of those
1530 CEOs very quickly reversed that, they are talking. Questions
1531 arise about the effectiveness of different types of emergency
1532 communications, the depth and quality of the information
1533 provided, free access to alerts, and the resilience of the
1534 infrastructure supporting these alerts.

1535 It is essential to ensure that all Americans can freely
1536 access lifesaving information during emergencies through
1537 interconnected, innovative, and overlapping emergency
1538 communication services. That is a fact. But at the same
1539 time, we cannot undermine innovation. The United States has
1540 to stay competitive globally. So let me try to ask a lot of
1541 questions fast.

1542 This past October, FEMA and the FCC conducted a
1543 nationwide Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, IPAWS,
1544 test of the emergency alert system and wireless emergency
1545 alerts, which included alerts on TVs, radios, and cell
1546 phones. It reached millions of Americans. Ms. Cooper, how
1547 crucial is it to have a reliable emergency communication

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1548 system in place, and what steps does this legislation take to
1549 improve and modernize the IPAWS system?

1550 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. There is nothing more important to
1551 the American people than to make sure that we have an
1552 apparatus in place that alerts us.

1553 What happened after the 9/11 and what the country did,
1554 in shoring up these PEP stations to ensure that the
1555 President, no matter who he is, can reach the public, 90
1556 percent of them through AM radio, is significant. It is
1557 important, the PEP. So that is the first line of defense.

1558 Any way that we can reach the public is important, but
1559 our ability to speak to them not only while it is happening
1560 before, during, and after, and no one does that better than
1561 AM radio.

1562 *Mrs. Dingell. Thank you. I think again it is
1563 important to reiterate the redundancy in our emergency
1564 communications is a crucial component. Mr. Bozzella, would
1565 this type of legislation be helpful in identifying what
1566 further investments or authorities are necessary to modernize
1567 and harden our emergency communications infrastructure and
1568 the ultimate impact on consumers?

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1569 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes. Thank you, Congresswoman Dingell.
1570 First, I do think it is appropriate for government to
1571 continue to study as consumer tastes change and as
1572 technologies change how we can effectively broadcast to the
1573 public. No one is taking away AM radio, certainly not the
1574 automakers. I am an AM radio fan, so I think studying the
1575 question is important.

1576 I wouldn't first mandate a particular technology and
1577 then study it, as the bill does. So I think a study first
1578 makes good sense.

1579 *Mrs. Dingell. Thank you. I think it would be
1580 preemptive to consider a full mandate, but I also think it is
1581 preemptive to fully remove this technology from vehicles
1582 without getting the facts and examining the potential
1583 impacts.

1584 Switching gears, I am grateful that the member companies
1585 of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation have committed to
1586 providing free emergency alert to _ alert access to
1587 consumers. Mr. Bozzella, last year in front of this
1588 committee the Alliance discussed the importance of access to
1589 safety information for consumers. Are your member companies

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1590 committed to providing free access to emergency information
1591 to their customers?

1592 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes, we are. We did then, we are now,
1593 and we are committed to doing it in the future.

1594 We are also committing to making sure that customers are
1595 aware at the point of sale about cars that may not have
1596 analogue AM radio receivers in them, so we are for
1597 disclosure.

1598 And we are also willing to, if customers want it in cars
1599 that don't have analogue AM radio, to provide an AM radio, a
1600 hand-crank, battery-type AM radio for just the types of
1601 communications before, during, and after that Ms. Spann-
1602 Cooper talks about.

1603 *Mrs. Dingell. Thank you, good. Consumers shouldn't
1604 have to pay access to lifesaving emergency information. It
1605 is crucial that each company you represent makes clear how
1606 consumers will receive these alerts at no extra cost in these
1607 new vehicles. Mr. Bozzella, how would consumers receive
1608 emergency alerts when they are unable to access the Internet
1609 when in their vehicles?

1610 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes, so the vast majority of vehicles

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1611 today have analogue AM radio in them, more than 99 percent of
1612 vehicles today. More than 90 percent of vehicles for sale
1613 today have analogue AM radio in them, so they will continue
1614 to have a multiplicity of platforms: digital, satellite,
1615 analogue AM, and FM radio. No question about that.

1616 For the few vehicles that don't have analogue AM radio
1617 receivers today, and customers want them, those companies
1618 will provide analogue radios to support emergencies and
1619 broadcasting content both in and out of the vehicle.

1620 The content, I agree, is important, and no one wants to
1621 take that away.

1622 *Mr. Walberg. The gentlelady's time is expired, and now
1623 I represent _ recognize the good doctor from Florida,
1624 Representative Dunn.

1625 *Mr. Dunn. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

1626 So I think, as we have all heard today, AM radio
1627 continues to be important to our constituents, offering a
1628 broad range of programming and essential emergency
1629 announcements which are traditionally transmitted classically
1630 over the AM bands.

1631 Further, given the long wavelength of AM radio, we can

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1632 hear these stations from hundreds of miles away, which makes
1633 it an ideal form of communication in emergencies and in rural
1634 settings.

1635 I am going to give you a sense I have here that this
1636 feels like this is an almost urban versus rural bias. If you
1637 live in a major metropolitan area, you are probably listening
1638 to FM or satellite radio. But in my rural district you run
1639 out of FM coverage pretty quickly, and when the prominent
1640 lines of communications fail, as they did after Hurricane
1641 Michael in my district, when individuals can't access the
1642 Internet, AM radio offers a reliable means of communication
1643 for warnings and what not. I can't particularly wrap my head
1644 around why we are trying to discuss getting rid of this
1645 critical, fail-safe technology today.

1646 We have heard from automotive representatives that
1647 electric vehicles generate electromagnetic interference.
1648 But, you know, there is 82 million people listening to AM
1649 radio every month. There is two million driving electric
1650 vehicles. So I think this is one we could leave alone.

1651 I want to get into the questions here. Mr. Shapiro,
1652 following the tornadoes that hit my district earlier this

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1653 year, much of our wireless infrastructure is still being
1654 rebuilt. This has left people, even in some of the more
1655 populated portions of my district, without cell phone
1656 connectivity all the time. You know, depending on where
1657 their location is. Hurricane season is coming down on us.
1658 Some of my constituents may have unknowingly purchased
1659 vehicles that have removed access to their AM radio. How
1660 should you recommend _ what do you recommend that they find
1661 lifesaving information if they need that at a moment's
1662 notice?

1663 *Mr. Shapiro. Well, thank you, Dr. Dunn. And when we
1664 are talking about AM radio and all these receptions during
1665 emergencies and things like that, most of the time people are
1666 getting it at home. But for some reason, the auto
1667 manufacturers are being asked to foot the bill for the AM
1668 radio providers.

1669 There is so many different ways of getting AM radio,
1670 frankly, today, whether it is via satellite or via the
1671 Internet. I know that my colleague here, I have listened to
1672 her radio station through the Internet as well as AM radio.
1673 But this is a solution in terms of a problem, because 98

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1674 percent of the top 100 vehicles models sold this past year
1675 had AM radio. The ones that don't for the most part at this
1676 point are a few electric vehicle companies like Tesla,
1677 because they have designed their car in such a way that it
1678 does not have AM radio.

1679 Now there are 100 different Chinese manufacturers of
1680 cars, most of them focusing on an EV. They are getting way
1681 ahead of us, and that is a fact. And now we are telling our
1682 car companies that make electric vehicles that they have to
1683 go back to the design board and go through several iterations
1684 to somehow figure out how they could take that very hostile
1685 environment of multiple batteries and say, "You have to put
1686 this in there," even though, frankly, their consumers
1687 probably who are buying these very expensive electric cars at
1688 Tesla don't want it.

1689 *Mr. Dunn. So, you know, I think there is _ you can
1690 park the car and listen to the radio, too.

1691 Ms. Spann-Cooper, I have a question for you. Do you
1692 think your listeners all have the ability to stream your
1693 stations, or are they listening over broadcast?

1694 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. I think that some do stream, but a

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1695 large swath of them still listen to the radio on the dial.

1696 *Mr. Dunn. And it is nice to have it free, frankly.

1697 So Mr. Bozzella, how much revenue does the average auto
1698 manufacturer generate from apps and subscription services in
1699 the automobiles?

1700 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes, so I don't have a specific
1701 industry-wide answer for you, but it is not a lot right now.
1702 That is not our business model.

1703 *Mr. Dunn. Okay. So I was under the impression there
1704 was more money in that, actually, to be honest. They seem to
1705 be chasing down a lot of data in automobiles. And when we
1706 went to the Right to Repair Act, they certainly fought back
1707 on us no end because they want to _ the OEMs wanted the right
1708 to pursue that information.

1709 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes, that is a different set of issues,
1710 which I am happy to _

1711 *Mr. Dunn. You know, with the money that is involved,
1712 that makes me wonder what the auto industry's motivation
1713 might actually be to drive their customers to apps and
1714 subscription services instead of free and unmonitored AM
1715 radio. That is just a thought I have. I leave that for you

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1716 to think about. I don't have any statistics on it.

1717 Also, Mr. Bozzella, I mentioned earlier AM radio, which
1718 has 80 million listeners a month and more _ it has more
1719 listeners than everything else. Does it seem reasonable to
1720 you we continue to provide that service, at least for now?

1721 I mean, it seems crazy. You have the sense of Congress.
1722 We are not really willing to get rid of this.

1723 *Mr. Bozzella. I 100 percent agree with you, and here
1724 is what is happening today. Customers have choices. More
1725 than 99 percent of vehicles on the road today have analogue
1726 AM radio, well over 90 percent. You heard Mr. Shapiro give
1727 you a high number for vehicles sold last year that are in the
1728 marketplace, have analogue AM radio.

1729 We are committed to disclosing to customers at the point
1730 of sale about vehicles that may not have it in it. I think
1731 customers should be informed. I think AM radio is important.
1732 I am a big listener of AM radio, and we are not about taking
1733 it away.

1734 *Mr. Dunn. Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Chairman,
1735 I yield back.

1736 *Mr. Walberg. I thank the gentleman. I recognize the

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1737 gentlelady from Illinois who represents the district where I
1738 bought my first AM radio.

1739 [Laughter.]

1740 *Ms. Kelly. Calumet City. Thank you everyone, and
1741 thank you to the witnesses.

1742 Ensuring diverse voices are able to engage in a changing
1743 media landscape is a priority of mine. Representation really
1744 matters, and I am thankful for Melody Spann-Cooper and Mr.
1745 Ahasteen for your participation in this important
1746 conversation.

1747 And like was said, her radio station helped me with my
1748 maternal mortality legislation, but also has done PSAs when I
1749 did it around crib deaths and crib bumpers, and things like
1750 that. So I am very grateful to stations in the Chicagoland
1751 area such as WVON, WRLL for serving as a trusted source for
1752 news, entertainment, education throughout the Chicagoland
1753 market.

1754 And Mr. Ahasteen, you alluded to how Navajo Nation uses
1755 their cars and gets their information.

1756 Ms. Melody Spann-Cooper, can you talk about the
1757 importance to the community you serve to be able to access AM

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1758 radio from their cars? Because when I have been on the show,
1759 you have a tremendous listening audience from the car.

1760 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Thank you, and it is important that
1761 we, of course, keep it in the cars for the entertainment
1762 purposes, but also in cases of emergency.

1763 I think about your district, and how we assisted. Not
1764 long ago there was a flood where people lost a lot of their,
1765 you know, home furnishings and basements. And how _ and on
1766 the west side of Chicago, and how our station really opened
1767 up for you, for FEMA, for others to get information on how to
1768 get the _ to get these services.

1769 Quite frankly, people spend a lot of time in their
1770 automobiles, right? They are in the house, they have got
1771 other options. Think about it. In your car, you have got
1772 one option, pretty much, to connect. And in those emergency
1773 situations, it is radio, and it is good to know,
1774 Congresswoman, that there is a place that you could go and
1775 you can get the information you need.

1776 I think about another example, too. Recently,
1777 Congressman Jackson had a water crisis in his district, and
1778 we even went one step further in getting people the

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1779 information that they needed, but providing a place on our
1780 website where they can put in their zip code to find out if
1781 their area was damaged, in addition to what we were sharing,
1782 right?

1783 And so again, this is important for not only during the
1784 storm or before the storm happens, but really taking people
1785 from nuts to bolts and being _ and assisting the American
1786 public in times of crisis.

1787 *Ms. Kelly. But even in times that are not crisis or
1788 emergency, it just seems like you are trusted sources for
1789 people, period. You know? So that is the other thing.

1790 What would be the economic, I guess, consequences if
1791 this, you know, were to go forward?

1792 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Well _

1793 *Ms. Kelly. Not no AM. I know you guys are saying you
1794 don't mean that, but just _

1795 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Right. In addition to _ I am sorry.

1796 *Ms. Kelly. No, both of you. You can go first.

1797 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. So in addition to being a
1798 broadcaster, we are business people. We employ people.
1799 Forty-three folks own homes, send their kids to school, do

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1800 what you do as an American.

1801 But here is even a bigger lens than the employees is the
1802 service, the public service that we provide for our
1803 constituencies in the Black and Brown communities in the _
1804 around Chicago.

1805 *Ms. Kelly. Mr. Ahasteen?

1806 *Mr. Ahasteen. From an economic perspective, the Navajo
1807 Nation created KTNN as one of our very many successful tribal
1808 enterprises. So it does, in a sense, help support the Navajo
1809 economy. But I think what we really are focused on is making
1810 sure that the people are getting information to them in a
1811 language that they understand and can ascertain.

1812 Listening to English, you know, especially if let's say
1813 there is a natural disaster and President Biden makes a
1814 speech and what not, and that is broadcasted over the AM
1815 network, well, you are going to have a large percentage of
1816 Navajos not understand what is going on. But at least after
1817 the speech we have someone who speaks Navajo who can transmit
1818 that message immediately after so folks understand what is
1819 going on and what is happening in the world.

1820 *Ms. Kelly. Thank you.

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1821 And Mr. Shapiro, a reasonable man, I know, do you see
1822 any happy medium or _

1823 *Mr. Shapiro. Yes, I do, actually, in a number of
1824 different ways. I think we all agree that AM radio is very
1825 important, providing a service to the public. It does have
1826 some noise issues and some signal issues, but what _ we have
1827 had a longstanding commitment _ committee with the National
1828 Association of Broadcasters, and we agree on technical
1829 specifications to improve those.

1830 The reality is we have never disagreed when we come out
1831 with the final result, because it is by consensus and there
1832 are engineers working together to solve a problem. The
1833 difference is every time we have tried and the engineers have
1834 agreed, it hasn't been implemented. So AM radio has suffered
1835 market share because of its technical capabilities. But
1836 there is ways of improving that. Going digital, going
1837 streaming, others.

1838 AM should and will survive, but I think this is a
1839 solution in search of a problem. There is, like _ I would
1840 love to find someone who bought a car and didn't _ a Tesla,
1841 and didn't know that it didn't have AM radio. And there is

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1842 plug-ins, there is ways of getting around it. There is other
1843 sources of getting into the car. So I just don't understand
1844 why it has to be a mandate. And that is where I disagree
1845 with my colleagues on this panel, at least two of them,
1846 because a mandate to me in this area, and getting in safety
1847 standards from an automobile and opening up this whole new
1848 area is dangerous and it hurts U.S. competition globally in
1849 electric vehicles.

1850 *Ms. Kelly. Thank you so much.

1851 And I yield back no time.

1852 *Mr. Bilirakis. [Presiding] Thank you. The gentle lady
1853 yields back, and I appreciate it. Now I will recognize Mrs.
1854 Lesko from the great State of Arizona.

1855 And we are going to miss you. What a great member she
1856 is. I recognize you for five minutes of questioning.

1857 *Mrs. Lesko. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You still have
1858 to put up with me for eight months.

1859 [Laughter.]

1860 *Mrs. Lesko. First of all, I want to thank you, Mr.
1861 Ahasteen, for being here today and explaining to us why AM
1862 radio is important for the Navajo Nation because I didn't

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1863 know that before. And I am glad that you are from Arizona,
1864 because that is my great state. And so we live in a
1865 wonderful state.

1866 For those of you that haven't visited, you need to come
1867 now, before it gets too hot.

1868 [Laughter.]

1869 *Mrs. Lesko. My first question is for Mr. Bozzella.

1870 I think you said something to the effect of EVs,
1871 electric vehicles, and analogue AM don't always mix.

1872 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes.

1873 *Mrs. Lesko. Yet about half of the EV car companies are
1874 now putting in the AM radio, installing the AM radio. And so
1875 can you tell me if they can do it, why can't all of the EV
1876 manufacturers do it?

1877 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes, thanks. That is a great question.
1878 So not every manufacturer have the same platforms, the same
1879 technology arrays, and the same approaches to designing
1880 vehicles. And so some companies, because of how they have
1881 built the vehicles and how they have arrayed their batteries,
1882 their battery management systems in their motors are maybe
1883 more capable of doing the type of shielding and the type of

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1884 work required to be able to address the interference issues.
1885 There is no question _ nobody disputes that there is
1886 interference issues. The question is, how do you address
1887 them?

1888 I do think that in the future you could see other
1889 companies sort of making those same investments. But I think
1890 the most important aspect of this bill is this bill takes AM
1891 and it puts it ahead of every other technology investment and
1892 safety investment an automaker needs to make. And so you
1893 have to account for that first, and then deal with the other
1894 trade-offs that are related to safety and emissions. I don't
1895 think that that is the best approach.

1896 I do think your broader point, though, is right, which
1897 is there are ways for manufacturers to address this. It
1898 takes time and it takes money.

1899 *Mrs. Lesko. Yes.

1900 *Mr. Bozzella. And I think we can respond to customer
1901 needs _

1902 *Mrs. Lesko. And that is my next question. Two of the
1903 things that you have brought up _ and I think Mr. Shapiro has
1904 brought up _ is cost and weight.

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1905 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes.

1906 *Mrs. Lesko. How much more does it cost, and what is _
1907 how much weight does it add to the vehicle?

1908 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes. So the cost issue is \$3.8 billion
1909 between now _ \$3.8 billion _

1910 *Mrs. Lesko. But per car.

1911 *Mr. Bozzella. Per car? It varies from manufacturer to
1912 manufacturer. And it _ because _

1913 *Mrs. Lesko. Do you have an estimate?

1914 *Mr. Bozzella. I don't, because the _

1915 *Mrs. Lesko. Because that is what I care about is per
1916 car, yes.

1917 *Mr. Bozzella. Okay. Well, you can take \$3.8 billion
1918 and divide it by about 15 million vehicles a year.

1919 The issue is not solely cost. The issue, as I said, is
1920 this is not a Federal motor vehicle safety standard. This is
1921 a mandate separate and apart from that.

1922 Now, with regard to weight _

1923 *Mrs. Lesko. Just because I have a time limit _ I am
1924 sorry _

1925 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes.

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1926 *Mrs. Lesko. _ how much is the weight per car?
1927 *Mr. Bozzella. So I don't know, I will get back to you.
1928 *Mrs. Lesko. Okay. Well, you said it is a _
1929 *Mr. Bozzella. But we fight over ounces.
1930 *Mrs. Lesko. It is a big concern.
1931 *Mr. Bozzella. We fight over ounces to _
1932 *Mrs. Lesko. Okay.
1933 *Mr. Bozzella. _ to make sure _
1934 *Mrs. Lesko. Yes, if you guys could get back to me _
1935 *Mr. Bozzella. Sure.
1936 *Mrs. Lesko. _ the extra cost per car and the extra
1937 weight per car so I can judge _ is this a big deal?
1938 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes, I _
1939 *Mrs. Lesko. _ is it not a big deal?
1940 *Mr. Bozzella. A hundred percent.
1941 *Mrs. Lesko. Is this just something you are saying to
1942 oppose it?
1943 *Mr. Bozzella. Happy to help.
1944 *Mrs. Lesko. I just don't know.
1945 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes.
1946 *Mrs. Lesko. My next question is for Mr. Shapiro.

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1947 Mr. Shapiro, in my home state of Arizona and in my
1948 congressional district I have a lot of senior citizens, a lot
1949 of senior citizens. And they don't _ you know, I think one
1950 of the alternatives to AM radio is, well, you could stream
1951 the content, right? Well, I don't know, first of all, if
1952 they purchase services to stream, and I don't know if _ look,
1953 I am thinking of my 94-year-old mother, right? She is not
1954 going to know how to do this.

1955 So how do you _ what do you say to those people?

1956 *Mr. Shapiro. I say they are my peers.

1957 [Laughter.]

1958 *Mr. Shapiro. I am a senior citizen.

1959 *Mrs. Lesko. You don't look 94. You are a lot younger
1960 than that.

1961 *Mr. Shapiro. I thought people would think I was 100
1962 because I am wearing the pin about the age of our
1963 association.

1964 But the reality is you are right. It is tougher for
1965 older people, and _ but 99.9 percent of the cars they are
1966 likely to buy have AM radio in it. So this is a solution in
1967 search of a problem. So that is what I would say to them.

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1968 You know, the car makers have agreed to say we are going
1969 to disclose very conspicuously if it doesn't have an AM
1970 radio. You are not going to see a lot of those, except on
1971 electric cars. And there are choices in electric cars now,
1972 Mr. Bozzella is right, it depends how they design the car.
1973 Some cars are designed differently. But is the most hostile
1974 environment you can imagine.

1975 If you read one document in all of this, I urge you to
1976 read the Center for Automotive Research report that was done,
1977 and it lays out the cost, it lays out why it costs more, and
1978 it lays out the complexity of solving a problem like this,
1979 especially if your original design said we could solve
1980 problems by not having AM radio in this car, and that would
1981 make us more efficient. It is a total redesign for a car
1982 like Tesla. And for the smaller companies, it may just drive
1983 them out of business, the American companies that are trying
1984 to break into the electric car market.

1985 *Mrs. Lesko. Well, and I thank you, Ms. Spann-Cooper,
1986 for being here. I have run out of time to ask you a
1987 question, but you did a great job.

1988 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Thanks.

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1989 *Mrs. Lesko. So thank you all for being here and
1990 testifying.

1991 And I yield back.

1992 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you.

1993 The gentlelady yields back. Now I will recognize the
1994 gentleman from Florida, my good friend Mr. Soto.

1995 You are recognized for five minutes of questioning.

1996 *Mr. Soto. Thank you, Chairman. You know, AM radio is
1997 part of everyday life in central Florida. We have every day
1998 hundreds of thousands of central Florida commuters going on
1999 I-4, 417, 528, 408, and more.

2000 The good news is, thanks to the infrastructure law, they
2001 are going to be spending a little less time in traffic. They
2002 are also listening to local FM and AM radio stations, local
2003 radio with local content about our region: sports, politics,
2004 faith-based, and more discussed every day on these stations.
2005 And this is especially true in the Hispanic community, as
2006 well as among our seniors and folks from rural areas.

2007 And one of the reasons why we see higher both minority
2008 and rural ownership of these AM stations is because it is a
2009 cheaper access to entry, right, than an FM station or _ you

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2010 know, and it is harder to get on some of these national
2011 satellite radio programs because it is all national. And if
2012 you are not one of the bigger players, it is difficult to get
2013 some of these local voices on here.

2014 So while AM radio is helpful on a daily basis in central
2015 Florida, it is essential during hurricane season. When the
2016 power is out and cell phones are dead, people turn on
2017 battery-powered radio if they are prepared. If not, the
2018 reality is they start their cars and turn on the radio when
2019 all else fails.

2020 Ms. Spann-Cooper, how is the reception of AM radio in
2021 your electric vehicle? You said you had _ you drive an EV.

2022 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. The reception is great.

2023 *Mr. Soto. Okay.

2024 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. I don't have a problem in the car
2025 that I have.

2026 *Mr. Soto. Okay.

2027 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. And since this is the mood that _
2028 Congressman Soto, that they are taking, if 50 percent of the
2029 automobiles that are already EV has AM radio in them, then
2030 what is wrong with the other 50 percent?

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2031 My colleague to my left talked about, you know, that
2032 they would give crank radios. So in the middle of an
2033 emergency, I assume we are supposed to get out of our car, go
2034 in the trunk, get a crank radio and start it. That is just
2035 not feasible when people are in an emergency.

2036 And so, since we are at this point when we are talking
2037 about the dollars that were necessary to do it, some studies
2038 say it is minimal for them to do it, right? And so that is
2039 why it is important that we look at going to 100 percent on
2040 EV for AM.

2041 *Mr. Soto. Thank you, Ms. Spann-Cooper. You know,
2042 nearly 10 percent of new cars that are purchased are electric
2043 vehicles in Florida. We are actually above the curve. We
2044 have an interesting state in that way. A lot of solar, a lot
2045 of EV vehicles, even as we have interesting politics.

2046 I was excited to vote for the Inflation Reduction Act,
2047 which helped make this possible. In my district we have the
2048 first used vehicle refurbishment Tesla dealership in the
2049 nation. We are getting the largest charging station in the
2050 nation also in my district in Yeehaw Junction. Yes, that is
2051 a place.

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2052 But the average vehicle is about 10 years old. So as we
2053 are talking, Ms. Spann-Cooper, about the future of AM
2054 businesses, as we get to 10, 15 years down the line, how does
2055 that look over the next 2 to 3 years about securing capital
2056 or advertising, or over the next 5 years or 8 years as this
2057 increases in market share like we hope it does? What would
2058 that mean for your business and other AM businesses? Would
2059 it make it more difficult to keep the doors open?

2060 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. It is difficult, Congressman Soto.
2061 But what I think people really are leaning into on a station
2062 like mine is live, local, trusted. There is a need to reach
2063 local communities, and that is what advertisers are leaning
2064 into now. That is _ their bread and butter is being able to
2065 connect with communities. And nobody does that better than
2066 radio.

2067 *Mr. Soto. One of the other things that concerns me is
2068 with social media, the Internet, with national news, and with
2069 satellite radio is there is a growing nationalization of our
2070 culture, right? Citizens know the latest congressional
2071 intrigue or White House intrigue, but they may not even know
2072 their own school board member, or what is happening with

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2073 sanitation, or clean water, or clean air, or the local
2074 economy, or the environment.

2075 So Ms. Spann-Cooper, how important do you think AM radio
2076 is for a locally-informed citizenry, making sure that we give
2077 every chance to have our local citizens understand what is
2078 happening in their backyards?

2079 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. I think it is so important. It is
2080 our life's work. It is social impact. It is the ability to
2081 reach these communities, whether through entertainment,
2082 sports, religion, talk, however you reach them.

2083 But more importantly, Mr. Soto, when you look at the
2084 emergency infrastructure, for what I am sitting here
2085 representing it is 360 because that is as important than
2086 anything when it comes to the safety of our people.

2087 *Mr. Soto. Well, I have experienced Hurricane Ian. My
2088 family's native island of Puerto Rico experienced Hurricane
2089 Maria, where AM radio was the only thing that people can rely
2090 on. We heard Mr. Ahasteen talk about the importance of it in
2091 native languages during emergencies.

2092 And so, you know, as we find our way through and
2093 navigate _ and thank you, Mr. Bozzella, for talking about the

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2094 weight and the cost, because that was going to be one of my
2095 questions, so way to go, Mrs. Lesko, for bringing that up _
2096 we are going to be looking to all these factors and
2097 appreciate your testimony here today. Thank you.

2098 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you very much. The gentleman
2099 yields back.

2100 Now, I do want to _ if you can get that information to
2101 us, sir, with regard to the weight, because I think everyone
2102 is interested in that.

2103 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes, will do.

2104 *Mr. Bilirakis. The bottom line per car estimate, if
2105 you can, please. Okay.

2106 All right, next we have Representative Fulcher.

2107 You are recognized for five minutes of questioning.

2108 *Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I think I
2109 am going to be brief here, because my questions have been
2110 answered. But I do want to make a comment and I do have a
2111 question.

2112 But I recently read an article May 23 of year 2023 in
2113 Car and Driver magazine, and it was with the CEO of Ford, Jim
2114 Farley. And this issue was the front and center of that

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2115 discussion. And after hearing your testimony in particular
2116 from Mr. Shapiro and Mr. Bozzella on the quantum leap that
2117 you say is necessary, and the ordeal that this is for
2118 manufacturers, I am wondering if Ford is just that far
2119 superior over everybody else because they seem to have
2120 figured it out.

2121 And I know the arguments of different platforms and all
2122 that kind of stuff, but it is an AM radio. And so I am just
2123 communicating I am struggling with your responses and your
2124 testimony. And I have read it and I heard it, and so it is
2125 not like I am ignoring that. So that is an editorial
2126 comment. I hear what you are saying. I am not sure I am
2127 totally buying off on it. Okay?

2128 The other thing I wanted to say _ and there is a
2129 question embedded with this _ is last weekend I had the
2130 privilege of driving from Kamiah, Idaho to Orofino, Idaho, on
2131 up through the Palouse to Spokane Airport, some of the most
2132 gorgeous country you have ever seen. And I am biased. It is
2133 my home turf. I love it. But it doesn't get any more
2134 beautiful. The Clearwater River, you track that thing and it
2135 is Clearwater for a reason. But I couldn't get any FM

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2136 signal. I couldn't use my cell phone for a lot _ there is
2137 patches where you can, but the AM signal comes through loud
2138 and clear.

2139 So my question _ and I will go to Mr. Shapiro and Mr.
2140 Bozzella, because I took an inadvertent crack at you on the
2141 front end of this _ what do I go tell my rural people in
2142 Orofino, Kamiah when that is the only thing they got?

2143 *Mr. Shapiro. Thank you for the question. And I
2144 haven't read the Car and Driver article, but I certainly will
2145 follow up and read it, and probably get a written response to
2146 you.

2147 Mr. Farley is, obviously, a leader of a major company,
2148 and each of the companies make their own decisions on what
2149 they introduce. That is _ and we stay away from that. That
2150 is the antitrust laws, and I respect those.

2151 But what I do think, in response to your question, is
2152 there are other choices. There is satellite radio. There
2153 is, obviously, other ways of getting music if you can get an
2154 Internet signal, which you clearly can't if it is cellular-
2155 based. And there is _ but there is different ways to do it.

2156 But right now what we are saying is there is a battle

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2157 for the eardrums. It is actually the name of a speech I gave
2158 to the NAB in 1997. And I said, "You got to get your
2159 technical act together.'" And it is _ what is going on on
2160 this issue, though, is you are putting one medium ahead of
2161 every other medium, and you are trying to make it a safety
2162 issue when there is no research and there is no data showing
2163 it is a safety issue.

2164 And that is what we are asking for _

2165 *Mr. Fulcher. Excuse me, if I can. It is a safety
2166 issue, if you can't get it.

2167 *Mr. Shapiro. Well, you are saying that _

2168 *Mr. Fulcher. If you can't get the message, that is a
2169 safety issue.

2170 *Mr. Shapiro. Well, it takes a very weird collection of
2171 things to occur before that situation will occur. Most of
2172 the time people are not in their car when there is a major
2173 thing, they are usually at home. And there is no requirement
2174 in this legislation for AM radio at home, or in a store, or
2175 in a college campus, or anywhere that people congregate. It
2176 is just _

2177 *Mr. Fulcher. But Mr. Shapiro, vehicles are mobile.

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2178 That is part of the point. And so _

2179 *Mr. Shapiro. Well, so are motorcycles, and you have to
2180 have that AM radio on _

2181 *Mr. Fulcher. If you cannot get a signal, if you cannot
2182 get communication, I would say there is a safety issue.

2183 *Mr. Shapiro. No, but you also have to have the AM
2184 radio on to even know that there is a problem. And you have
2185 to not have your satellite radio on, which is probably
2186 telling you there is a problem, or some other way to get into
2187 the car.

2188 So my point is it is a very _ and there has to be an AM
2189 radio broadcaster physically in the station telling you there
2190 is _

2191 *Mr. Fulcher. Well, to go back to my question, because
2192 I am running out of time _

2193 *Mr. Shapiro. Sir.

2194 *Mr. Fulcher. What do I tell my people in Orofino and
2195 Kamiah?

2196 *Mr. Shapiro. Tell them that there is no problem
2197 because they could buy cars with AM radio stations now so
2198 easily. Like, 99 _

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2199 *Mr. Fulcher. Okay, all right.

2200 Mr. Bozzella?

2201 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes, thank you for the question,
2202 Congressman. I would say that for now, in the foreseeable
2203 future, your constituents will be able to buy a car with an
2204 analogue AM radio.

2205 And what I would also say to your constituents is what
2206 you have heard at this hearing is that automakers are now
2207 committed to informing customers at the point of sale
2208 regarding any car that doesn't have it in it. And so what
2209 you have done today is you have improved consumer awareness
2210 about the few cars that don't have AM analogue radio in it.
2211 And if you are _ if you _ if I lived in that district, I
2212 would buy a car with analogue AM radio in it.

2213 *Mr. Fulcher. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Bozzella.

2214 And Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

2215 *Mr. Bozzella. Thank you, sir.

2216 *Mr. Bilirakis. Okay. Thank you. The gentleman yields
2217 back. I will recognize Mr. Obernolte for five minutes of
2218 questioning.

2219 *Mr. Obernolte. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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2220 *Mr. Bilirakis. And thanks for your patience.

2221 *Mr. Obernolte. Absolutely. Thank you to our
2222 witnesses.

2223 I have to say I am really conflicted on this topic
2224 because I am a fan of AM radio. I know many of my
2225 constituents rely on it for news and information. And I am
2226 very sensitive to the argument that it is a vital safety
2227 connection with the citizens of the United States. On the
2228 other hand, I am not generally a fan of using the heavy hand
2229 of government regulation to force consumers to spend money,
2230 and this _ that is what this bill would do.

2231 Now, one of the things I am a little disappointed that
2232 we haven't been able to nail down is the actual cost that we
2233 would be imposing on consumers through this, and this is not
2234 the first hearing that this issue has received. In fact,
2235 other committees that I serve on have had hearings on this
2236 issue. In those hearings it has been estimated that it is at
2237 least \$50 in an internal combustion engine vehicle when _
2238 Congresswoman Lesko was asking about this, I think you said
2239 it was 3.8 billion vehicles divided by _ or billion dollars
2240 divided by 15 million vehicles. Back of the envelope math

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2241 says that is about \$250 a vehicle.

2242 *Mr. Bozzella. Per year.

2243 *Mr. Obernolte. Per year?

2244 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes.

2245 *Mr. Obernolte. Per _ right, for the _

2246 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes.

2247 *Mr. Obernolte. But I am talking about what cost are we
2248 imposing on consumers. So, I mean, something between \$50 and
2249 \$250.

2250 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes, we owe you that, and I _

2251 *Mr. Obernolte. Okay.

2252 *Mr. Bozzella. We will provide you that.

2253 *Mr. Obernolte. Right. But, I mean, it is not nothing
2254 and it is not pennies.

2255 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes.

2256 *Mr. Obernolte. It is, you know, it is _ no one has
2257 suggested it is less than an incremental cost of \$50 per
2258 vehicle. So this is the problem that I have, is how do I go
2259 to my constituents and tell them that we are forcing them to
2260 spend \$50 on something that they may not want? And that is
2261 where I really start to struggle with this issue.

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2262 So I want to focus on the issue of emergency
2263 communications because, to me, that is the compelling _ the
2264 only really compelling argument that would justify forcing
2265 consumers to do that.

2266 And Mr. Bozzella, this question is for you because you
2267 were talking about how AM radio is an outdated technology for
2268 emergency communications. And when I think about the
2269 limitations of AM, and I look at what we have now, we have
2270 got low Earth orbit satellites that are just amazing. We
2271 have got most of the Earth covered at this point. The
2272 receivers are getting smaller and smaller. Certainly, a lot
2273 of phones these days have satellite communications built in.
2274 My new iPhone does. It is for emergencies only, but I can
2275 use it that way. And it has a compelling advantage because
2276 it is two-way, right? I can call out if I say, hey, there is
2277 someone injured here, please come get us, instead of just
2278 getting a message, you know, that is broadcast to everybody.

2279 And the converse is also true. If someone wants to
2280 broadcast a message just straight to me, hey, your mother has
2281 had a medical problem, you need to get back to civilization,
2282 they can do that. So it has got some compelling advantages.

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2283 Why on Earth would we force people to invest in an older
2284 technology, instead of, if this was really our concern,
2285 trying to build out a new technology that has those
2286 advantages?

2287 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes. Look, I think that is an essential
2288 question. And I think that is why, you know, I believe that
2289 the idea of a study here is so important. And I think
2290 because _ and look, if you look at the FEMA, you know, you
2291 instructed FEMA to do an analysis and work on modernization.
2292 They concluded that a multiplicity of platforms is where we
2293 have to go.

2294 The FCC also, the Federal Communications Commission, in
2295 their report and order from 2020 said the same thing. You
2296 know, what is happening is AM analogue is declining, and so
2297 therefore we need a multiplicity of platforms.

2298 We are not here to say that AM analogue doesn't have a
2299 role. But your point is critical, which is we need a
2300 multiplicity of platforms, depending on both current and new
2301 technology, to ensure that people are prepared and informed
2302 in an emergency.

2303 *Mr. Obernolte. Right. All right. Well, thank you.

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2304 And if I could amplify Congresswoman Lesko's request _

2305 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes.

2306 *Mr. Obernolte. _ because that information is really
2307 critical as we weigh this decision, the exact cost that our
2308 consumers are going to be asked to bear, and understanding
2309 that it is different for internal combustion engines and
2310 electric vehicles _

2311 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes.

2312 *Mr. Obernolte. _ probably much higher for electric
2313 vehicles. And also the weight penalty for EVs. That would
2314 be helpful. Right.

2315 Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

2316 *Mr. Bilirakis. The gentleman yields back. Yes, we
2317 need that information, there is no question, to make
2318 decisions. No question.

2319 All right, I am going to recognize Representative
2320 Armstrong for his five minutes of questioning.

2321 *Mr. Armstrong. Anybody know if the cost for the AM
2322 radio in a Tesla is more less than the \$7,500 rebate?

2323 [Laughter.]

2324 *Mr. Armstrong. No, I am asking because we are acting

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2325 like this is a free market, and it is not. And with all due
2326 respect to my friends who live in more populated areas, AM
2327 radio is still the best way to find out if a tornado is
2328 coming before you get on the highway and drive 150 miles in
2329 North Dakota or New Mexico.

2330 And I don't particularly care how much it costs, because
2331 it might work somewhere and it might work with low orbit
2332 satellite technology. All of those things might be great,
2333 but until they exist in a meaningful way when you live in a
2334 place that has hail, tornadoes, floods, blizzards, all of
2335 those different things, but you also have a low population
2336 base _ so if you give the _ you have an entire Federal
2337 Government that is proposing, mandating moving towards
2338 electric vehicles _ I come from a place that, just to be
2339 honest, Ford, Toyota, Chevy, they care a lot more about their
2340 sales in California and whatever California is doing than
2341 they care about Tioga, North Dakota. But you know what? We
2342 need all that stuff in Tioga, North Dakota. It is the only
2343 thing we have.

2344 And you know what you have in your house when something
2345 goes on? Public broadcasting, which tells you in a very loud

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2346 _ everybody knows Wednesday night you get the thing on your
2347 TV that says this is a test of the Public Broadcasting
2348 Service.

2349 And you know when you turn on your radio in North
2350 Dakota? When you look outside and be like, wow, that looks
2351 bad, or before you get out of your house to drive 150 miles.
2352 And if you allow electric vehicles to have the choice as to
2353 whether or not they have AM radio at the same time you are
2354 mandating more electric vehicles, I am going to have 19
2355 people at a quick charging station at the dumbest quick
2356 charging station maybe in America, which is between Bismarck
2357 and Dickinson, waiting because there is two of them but only
2358 one of them is broken down _

2359 [Laughter.]

2360 *Mr. Armstrong. _ because this is exactly what is going
2361 on, and they are going to look outside and they are going to
2362 be like, oh, I don't have cell service. I don't get FM, and
2363 I don't have any idea if this is just a cloud that I got to
2364 worry about, or if this is something really serious and we
2365 all got to climb into the one car that is already charged and
2366 drive 40 miles home.

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2367 No matter how big any of this stuff gets, they are not
2368 going to cover the Dickinson Roughriders baseball team. And
2369 until the technology exists to allow my constituents to
2370 actually get this information in a meaningful way, the
2371 economy of the government regulation and mandates, by the
2372 way, on population of where these vehicles are sold, is going
2373 to take that choice away from North Dakotans. That is the
2374 model. Like, that is the model that exists.

2375 And you can say you can continue to buy a car with AM
2376 radio, and you can do all of that. But if you give all of
2377 these things the different versions of where this goes, you
2378 are going to have all of these different things that happen.

2379 So you probably don't have the winners we have, Mr.
2380 Ahasteen, but AM radio being important in North Dakota, I
2381 understand that in your testimony only about four percent of
2382 your people have access to quality Internet.

2383 *Mr. Ahasteen. That is correct, Congressman.

2384 *Mr. Armstrong. And they rely on AM radio for crucial
2385 public safety updates?

2386 *Mr. Ahasteen. That is correct.

2387 *Mr. Armstrong. And there are times where our nation

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2388 will have public service emergencies like train derailments,
2389 shut down on I-40 in the Arizona-New Mexico border. I think
2390 it just happened this week, right?

2391 *Mr. Ahasteen. That is correct, Congressman.

2392 *Mr. Armstrong. So driving in the Navajo Nation sounds
2393 a little bit like driving in North Dakota.

2394 Is maintaining the AM emergency broadcast system in
2395 every car crucial to ensuring every method of mass
2396 communication possible is built into the IPAWS system?

2397 *Mr. Ahasteen. Yes.

2398 *Mr. Armstrong. We have these multiple pathways so many
2399 of my constituents in North Dakota aren't left behind in the
2400 event of a national attack or weather event. And I get it.
2401 In a city, in an urban area _ which, by the way, is where you
2402 sell most of your cars _ you have access to all of these
2403 other things. But rather than an AM radio requirement being
2404 a solution in search of a problem, the problem is the
2405 increasing mandates for EVs and the emission standards that
2406 come with them. These mandates cause additional
2407 manufacturing difficulties for auto manufacturers.

2408 There is a rule out right now that is going to force all

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2409 of my heavy ton farm trucks in North Dakota to be electric.
2410 Like, outside of _ the truck already costs three times more.
2411 Put a radio in it. Like, it is three-and-a-half times more
2412 expensive. It is 800 to 2,500 pounds more heavier so I can
2413 haul 800 pounds less potatoes. It takes me twice as long to
2414 deliver them in Minnesota. Your French fries all get more
2415 expensive, and none of that goes back to my potato farmer in
2416 Grafton. The least we could do is let him listen to the
2417 local American Legion baseball game while he is doing it.

2418 I mean, these are all the things that are happening
2419 right now. So when you sit here and we have these
2420 conversations, I am like, build the technology. When low
2421 orbit satellites are allowed to do all of this, I am in.
2422 Whatever is the best way to communicate with my constituents,
2423 I am all for it. But where we are at in my state right now,
2424 it is AM radio. And we don't have the population base to
2425 have a functional, competitive spot in the market.

2426 So with that I yield back.

2427 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you, I appreciate it, the
2428 gentleman yields back.

2429 We are waiting for Mr. Carter. He is on his way. Let

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2430 me just ask you all again. Why not? I mean, you are hearing
2431 from our constituents. I mean, you are hearing from us, and
2432 we represent our constituents. People want AM radio, there
2433 is no question.

2434 At Ford _ I guess Ford was, you know, decided to keep
2435 the AM radio, at least for now. There is nobody here from
2436 Ford to testify today. But why not?

2437 I mean, why is it so difficult? Just like Mr. Armstrong
2438 said, why is this such a big issue when our constituents
2439 really want it for emergency purposes, but they also want it
2440 for entertainment purposes?

2441 So answer that question. I mean, I know we are going to
2442 get the cost estimate and what have you, but he is right. I
2443 mean, Armstrong is right about the cost of the vehicle,
2444 buying a truck, I mean, a 150, one of the best, Tom Brady's
2445 favorite car.

2446 But you know, why not just keep it in there at no cost
2447 to the consumer?

2448 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes. So I will take that on.

2449 *Mr. Bilirakis. Okay.

2450 *Mr. Bozzella. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the

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2451 question.

2452 *Mr. Bilirakis. Sure.

2453 *Mr. Bozzella. It is a competitive marketplace. Some
2454 companies are going to do _ respond to your question _

2455 *Mr. Bilirakis. Yes.

2456 *Mr. Bozzella. _ in the way _ in the following way. We
2457 are going to keep it in, and we are going to continue to do
2458 it, and we are going to manage the interference by masking,
2459 you know, building cladding, and doing those types of things.

2460 The challenge here is vehicles today are going to
2461 increasingly require much higher voltage. And so that higher
2462 voltage, whether it is higher voltage to support sensing
2463 capabilities for advanced safety features or it is voltage to
2464 support electrification, is going to create interference.
2465 And so the question is just how you deal with that.

2466 And it is also about the future. Here is an important
2467 thing to keep in mind. The companies that are competing
2468 today in the U.S. market are also competing around the world.
2469 And one of the challenges they have is producing more
2470 efficient, longer-range batteries so that vehicles can go
2471 further on a charge. That is going to require more voltage,

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2472 it is going to require investments in motors. That is just
2473 going to create more interference. So that is the dilemma.
2474 So companies are going to respond to that dilemma in
2475 different ways. That is a competitive marketplace.

2476 I do believe, as I said earlier, that AM radio, analogue
2477 AM radio, is going to be available in the U.S. market for a
2478 long time to come. To the extent that you need to study the
2479 questions today about emergency access, I think you should do
2480 that, and we will continue to be supportive of that work
2481 because it is essential that these communications happen.
2482 But really, this is about innovation and it is about
2483 competition.

2484 *Mr. Bilirakis. Okay, I _ yes, Mr. Carter is coming
2485 back right now, but again, the lady, distinguished
2486 gentlewoman, Melody, she testified that she has an EV. She
2487 has an EV and there is no interference currently.

2488 I don't know, if you want to tell me what type of car,
2489 you can. If you _ it is up to you.

2490 [Laughter.]

2491 *Mr. Bilirakis. But what do you say to that?

2492 *Mr. Bozzella. Yes. So, as I said, there are EVs in

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2493 the marketplace that have AM radios. I don't know what EV
2494 she drives. I drive an EV, and it has an analogue AM radio.

2495 *Mr. Bilirakis. Do you have any problems with it?

2496 *Mr. Bozzella. Occasionally, but it is _ you know, I
2497 have problems with AM radio _

2498 *Mr. Bilirakis. Well, yes, we have problems with _

2499 *Mr. Bozzella. _ high voltage power line.

2500 *Mr. Bilirakis. Yes, every day we have problems. I
2501 mean _

2502 *Mr. Bozzella. I mean, like, it is just the reality of
2503 AM radio.

2504 *Mr. Bilirakis. The signal is always difficult.

2505 *Mr. Bozzella. Correct.

2506 *Mr. Bilirakis. You know, you try to get a baseball
2507 game, and it is very difficult.

2508 *Mr. Bozzella. I feel your pain, but mostly because my
2509 team is not so good.

2510 But in any event, just quickly, this is _ companies are
2511 going to take different approaches. And what you want to do
2512 is encourage innovation, encourage innovation. And let's
2513 make sure that customers are aware of what technologies are

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2514 in their vehicles, and that we allow companies to be
2515 competitive.

2516 I appreciate the economic value of AM radio. The auto
2517 industry represents 10 million jobs in states all across
2518 America. For every dollar an auto manufacturer invests in a
2519 job, \$3.45 of economic value is created. This is an economic
2520 and national security industry _

2521 *Mr. Bilirakis. Okay.

2522 *Mr. Bozzella. _ focused on cutting-edge technology,
2523 and we want to continue to provide that.

2524 *Mr. Bilirakis. All right. Well, thank you very much.
2525 Mr. Carter has arrived, so I am going to recognize him for
2526 five minutes of questioning. Thank you.

2527 *Mr. Carter. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you
2528 all waiting on me. I promise you I will try to be as
2529 succinct as I can.

2530 I represent south Georgia. I represent the entire coast
2531 of Georgia, all the way from the South Carolina state line
2532 down to the Florida state line. Obviously, South Georgia, in
2533 the southern United States, hurricane is a big problem,
2534 natural disasters.

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2535 I want to tell you the story of a fire that happened at
2536 a chemical plant last year in my district. It was a massive
2537 fire in Brunswick, Georgia, in Glynn County, and it resulted
2538 in evacuations. Luckily, WGIG AM covered the fire live on
2539 air, and provided urgent messages and updates from emergency
2540 officials to the residents. This was invaluable, as you can
2541 quite imagine.

2542 As I say, we have been through hurricanes. I have lived
2543 there all my life, and I know we depend on the emergency
2544 radio network for updates during the hurricanes. And
2545 certainly, we depended on the AM radio during this
2546 evacuation, as well.

2547 Ms. Spann-Cooper, I want to ask you, can you explain how
2548 and why the AM radio band is the most resilient band which
2549 can withstand inclement weather events or fires like the one
2550 that we had in my district?

2551 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Sure. Well, because it works on an
2552 analogue system, and because it is able to go past mountains.
2553 And we have this tremendous PEP process that was put in place
2554 after 9/11, where the country actually invested in AM
2555 stations, over _ and radio stations, over 70 of them, sir,

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2556 which carry the signal. And we are able to get this
2557 information to all of the constituents. At any given time,
2558 because of this radio emergency system, the President of the
2559 United States is able to reach 90 percent of the American _

2560 *Mr. Carter. Ninety percent?

2561 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Ninety percent of the American
2562 population with instruction. Nobody else has that. They can
2563 alarm you that there is a fire. They can alarm you that
2564 something bad is happening. They don't have the ability to
2565 talk and give instruction to the American people.

2566 The reason you love that station, it is live, it is
2567 local, it is trusted.

2568 *Mr. Carter. Absolutely. Well, can you expand a little
2569 bit on the coordination between the AM broadcasters and the
2570 local emergency personnel?

2571 I know, look, I see it in my district, and I encourage
2572 it and I witness it, and that is the relationship that the
2573 emergency broadcast _ the emergency personnel and the AM
2574 broadcasters have.

2575 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. The public safety community is very
2576 supportive of AM stations. I see the fire officials walking

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2577 around and talking on the Hill, and that is a great thing.

2578 They are supportive.

2579 In Chicago, where we are, monthly the police _ the head
2580 of the police is on, communicating with the public. Our fire
2581 commissioner, Annette Holt, a regular on our station.

2582 The great thing about AM, outside of a warning, is it is
2583 there at the beginning, the middle, and the end of these
2584 conversations, and talking to constituents in these towns.
2585 That is something that this technology cannot do.

2586 *Mr. Carter. Great.

2587 *Mr. Shapiro. Can I just _

2588 *Mr. Carter. Sure, sure. You are welcome.

2589 *Mr. Shapiro. So my understanding is that there is no
2590 reason that the primary entry point stations need to be AM
2591 stations. In fact, they could be any transmitter. TV, FM,
2592 satellite could be a primary source for alerts. And the
2593 mandate that Congress put on our Federal Government that _
2594 with the EAS system is that it must reach 90 percent of the
2595 population, which it is doing under this combination of
2596 different stations as entry points.

2597 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. Can I respond to that?

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2598 *Mr. Carter. Absolutely.

2599 *Ms. Spann-Cooper. One of the reasons why the AM is
2600 important, Mr. Shapiro and Congressman, is if you think back
2601 to 9/11, when the towers went down, FM signals are on top of
2602 these buildings. AM is a ground game, which is why the
2603 majority of them are PEP. So they are not in places where
2604 catastrophes could happen and maybe the signal gets lost. AM
2605 radio is the backbone of our ability to reach the American
2606 public in times of crisis.

2607 *Mr. Carter. Mr. Shapiro?

2608 *Mr. Shapiro. Well, I mean, the reality is you have to
2609 be listening to AM radio for it to tell you about the crisis,
2610 and most people _

2611 *Mr. Carter. And that is why you tune in when there is
2612 a crisis.

2613 *Mr. Shapiro. And when we hear all these statistics
2614 about AM radio listening every month and things like that, as
2615 a percentage of where you are putting your ears _

2616 *Mr. Carter. Well, but I am talking about emergency
2617 situations.

2618 *Mr. Shapiro. During emergencies _ right.

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2619 *Mr. Carter. I am talking about the evacuation that
2620 happened when this chemical plant caught on fire.

2621 *Mr. Shapiro. I get it _

2622 *Mr. Carter. I am talking about _

2623 *Mr. Shapiro. _ and that requires that someone be
2624 manning that AM station. And one of the questions that is
2625 unanswered is how often that actually occurs, because a lot
2626 of this is done all electronically from remotely.

2627 So one question that Congress has never asked and should
2628 be answered _

2629 *Mr. Carter. If we know there is a hurricane coming,
2630 then they are going to be there.

2631 *Mr. Shapiro. If that station is manned.

2632 *Mr. Carter. When that _

2633 *Mr. Shapiro. Or staffed.

2634 *Mr. Carter. When that plant caught on fire, they went
2635 there. They made sure they were there.

2636 *Mr. Shapiro. And thank God they did. But that _

2637 *Mr. Carter. Okay _

2638 *Mr. Shapiro. There are other cases where they were not
2639 there, with train derailments and things like that. And the

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2640 station was empty, and those citizens didn't know.

2641 *Mr. Carter. But I can assure you they got there, and I
2642 assure you they got there pretty quick.

2643 Now, just one other point, and I appreciate your
2644 indulgence, Mr. Chairman, but I have to say, on behalf of
2645 what I have been hearing, that the interference that _ the
2646 electric vehicles, and that it can't be fixed, not only do I
2647 find that unbelievable, but I find it very disturbing in the
2648 sense that I am amazed at the innovation that is taking place
2649 with EVs. I am amazed at the progress that they have made.
2650 And now you are telling me that they can't fix the problem
2651 here with AM radios, the static? No, I am not buying that.
2652 I think if you want to bad enough, you can fix it.

2653 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you very much.

2654 *Mr. Carter. With that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield.

2655 *Mr. Bilirakis. Yes, the gentleman yields back. Thank
2656 you very much.

2657 Ms. Schakowsky, do you have anything else to add?

2658 *Ms. Schakowsky. No, I just want to thank our
2659 witnesses.

2660 I have to tell you, this has turned out to be a more

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2661 popular hearing than I had expected in terms of turnout. I
2662 am very happy about that. I am sorry I had to leave in the
2663 middle. People care about this, and it is important.

2664 And so we are going to talk about it further, but I
2665 think you hear that there is really a lot of bipartisan
2666 concern about doing away with some of the opportunities for
2667 individuals and for people. So thank you.

2668 *Mr. Bilirakis. Yes. And one thing I wanted to add,
2669 and then we will wrap up, is that we didn't get to this, but
2670 maybe we can have somebody respond to this _ in writing,
2671 though. What is the financial cost to some of these AM radio
2672 stations if the AM is not allowed to be in our vehicles? I
2673 think that is important, too, because I know people rely on
2674 these stations on a daily basis. I see it myself. I listen
2675 to AM.

2676 All right, thank you very much.

2677 *Ms. Schakowsky. I want to second what you just said.
2678 That is a good thing that we should get information from our
2679 witnesses on what is the cost, then, if it goes away.

2680 *Mr. Bilirakis. Yes. Okay, very good.

2681 I ask unanimous consent to insert in the record the

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2682 documents included on the staff hearing documents list.

2683 Without objection, made in order.

2684 [The information follows:]

2685

2686 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

2687

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2688 *Mr. Bilirakis. And we are all done, folks. Thank you
2689 so very much.

2690 [Whereupon, at 2:01 p.m., the subcommittee was
2691 adjourned.]