



July 19, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write today to urge you to support innovation within the autonomous vehicle (AV) sector that will provide a future with increased accessibility, mobility, and safety for all Americans. AVs will also play an important role in combating global warming and curbing the negative effects of climate change.

Chamber of Progress is a new tech industry coalition devoted to a progressive society, economy, workforce, and consumer climate. Our organization works to ensure that all Americans benefit from technological leaps, and that the tech industry operates responsibly and fairly.

We strongly believe that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration finalizing and publishing the Occupant Protection Final Rule (Final Rule)¹ will allow for the safe deployment of AVs and bring their benefits to communities across the country sooner.

As you know, the text of the final rule was released by the Department of Transportation on January 14, 2021, but it has not yet been published in the Federal Register. Your encouragement in finalizing this rule will help encourage the safe testing and development of AVs.

There are many benefits that AVs can provide our society. AVs can provide access to people with disabilities and the elderly. A Bureau of Transportation Statistics survey found that six million people with disabilities lack access to the transportation they need, limiting their ability to find job opportunities and see

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/03/30/2020-05886/occupant-protection-for-automated-driving-systems>



loved ones.² Additionally, AVs could reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks—the biggest source of transportation emissions—by 80 percent.³ Finally, deploying AVs on the road now could save hundreds of thousands of lives over the long term as the technology continues to become more advanced every year.⁴

The benefits to AV deployment should not be delayed. Namely, finalizing the Final Rule will bring about substantial positive impacts to our communities and climate. Thank you for all your work on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Bagchi".

Koustubh "K.J." Bagchi
Senior Director, Federal Public Policy

CC: Dr. Steven Cliff, Acting Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

² https://www.bts.gov/archive/publications/special_reports_and_issue_briefs/issue_briefs/number_03/entire

³ <https://e360.yale.edu/features/will-self-driving-cars-usher-in-a-transportation-utopia-or-dystopia>

⁴ <https://www.rand.org/blog/articles/2017/11/why-waiting-for-perfect-autonomous-vehicles-may-cost-lives.html>