



Consumer Federation of America

**STATEMENT OF JACK GILLIS
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AUTHOR OF THE CAR BOOK
BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT
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Good morning. My name is Jack Gillis. I am the Executive Director of the Consumer Federation of America (CFA) and author of *The Car Book* published in cooperation with the Center for Auto Safety. CFA is one of the nation's largest consumer organizations representing over 250 state, local and national consumer focused groups, many of which are DC based.

Autonomous vehicles have the potential to be a technological vaccine that could dramatically reduce the tragic toll that autos take on our society. However, like any successful vaccine, AV's need to be thoroughly tested to specific standards, before they are made available to the public. The current plan to let the Ford Motor Company use DC's streets as a testing ground for autonomous vehicles falls woefully short on the protections and oversight needed to ensure the safe introduction of the autonomous vehicle.

In addition to the various concerns already raised at this hearing, privacy, cybersecurity protections, government oversight, and data transparency must be a top priority to ensure the safe and efficient implementation of autonomous vehicle testing in the District. The lack of details on this experimental program should

raise numerous red flags for the committee, especially considering the results of similar programs in other cities that hastily allowed autonomous vehicle testing on their public streets. Because of the potential hazards associated with this untested and unregulated new product, DC needs to take specific actions to ensure the safety and security of millions of citizens who use Washington's streets.

First, there needs to be transparency in the details of the program and its specific implementation. The public and other stakeholders must be involved in the execution process and review of all aspects of the planned AV testing protocols. Any adverse impacts that arise from the testing must be publically disclosed and available for independent public review.

Secondly, the council needs to ensure that there are essential cybersecurity protections to protect both the vehicle and the passengers. With hacking becoming more and more commonplace, and the previously documented ability for a miscreant to take control of a vehicle, Ford must demonstrate to the District and its public that it will be able to prevent such activity. One can only imagine the tragic consequences of a hacker taking control of an AV in the nation's capital. In addition, should citizens be taking part in this experiment, the privacy of their personal data and activities must be protected.

Lastly, there needs to be commonsense protocols for identifying and evaluating adverse impacts on public safety by making all of the operational data associated with the experiment available for independent technical review. If Ford wants to use the public's streets for their experiment, then they must make all of their AV data available to that same public. An independent review is common practice in the development of any vaccine and autonomous vehicles should be treated no differently. Not only should there be independent review of the massive amounts of data collected and processed by the AV, but there should be an

independent review of the experiment itself. A board of independent experts is imperative in view of the fact that few government officials or members of the public have the ability to oversee what is likely one of the most complex products ever introduced in the history of the world.

In just the past 4 years, Ford has been responsible for recalling over 8 million vehicles for safety defects among standardly operating vehicles. This is about the same number of vehicles they sold during the past 4 years. The AV is exponentially more complex than today's vehicles, so one can only imagine their potential for failure. Who among us hasn't had their now commonplace computer "crash" at a most inconvenient time? While that may have caused a hardship, it pales in comparison to the tragic consequences of the "crash" of an AV's computers.

While AV's will undoubtedly be a technological vaccine that will make driving safer and help DC move towards its Vision Zero goal, this committee must make every effort to insure that DC residents and visitors don't become Guinea pigs in an uncontrolled experiment.

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