Opening Statement
Rep. Jan Schakowsky
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
Hearing on "Vehicle to Vehicle Communications and Connected Roadways of the Future"
June 25, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding today's hearing on vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) technology. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on this developing safety feature.

More than 2 million Americans were injured in car crashes last year, with more than 30,000 deaths. Those accidents and lost lives are tragic, but there have been significant auto safety improvements made since 1979, when a record 51,000 auto-related fatalities were recorded.

Safety technologies like seatbelts, anti-lock brakes, and airbags – despite the Takata recall – have significantly improved auto safety since vehicle deaths reached their peak almost 40 years ago.

In order to continue that progress, we must enhance existing safety features while at the same time considering new and innovative technologies. Dedicated short-range radio communications (DSRC) – which enable V2V– has been researched for 15 years, and it shows serious promise in further reducing traffic accidents.

V2V, as well as vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) allow for early detection of traffic risks and provide advanced warning to drivers in order to avoid accidents. Whether it's ensuring drivers can make safe left turns across traffic, knowing when a driver can safely pass another car on the road, or minimizing traffic congestion, these technologies have tremendous real-world benefits. It has been estimated that DSRC technology could prevent as many as 4 out of 5 accidents. I know first-hand how beneficial this technology could be: just the other day, I was a passenger in a little scrape that probably would have been prevented with V2V technology.

However, there are potential technical, privacy and security vulnerabilities associated with DSRC technology. DSRC technology could be interrupted by

other communications traveling over the same spectrum band. We must ensure that geolocation information and driving habits are not able to be collected by auto manufacturers or subcontractors and used for purposes unrelated to vehicle safety. Even more concerning is the vulnerability of advanced technologies in cars to remote access, which could cause vehicles to be breached and overtaken. Each of these threats needs to be fully vetted and safeguards must be implemented to prevent them from occurring.

Cars are already being manufactured with DSRC technology. As that technology continues to advance and is incorporated into more and more vehicles and infrastructure, we must establish rules of the road to maximize benefits while minimizing risks. NHTSA is working to develop standards and guidance to maximize V2V and V2I benefits, and I look forward to learning more about the rules the agency plans to advance to meet that objective.

Again, I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses to gain from their perspectives on how we can maximize the potential of V2V and V2I technology while minimizing potential risks. I yield back.