

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade Member Debbie Dingell

Hearing on “Examining Legislative Options to Strengthen Motor Vehicle Safety, Ensure Consumer Choice and Affordability, and Cement U.S. Automotive Leadership”

January 13, 2026

Thank you, Ranking Member Pallone.

I’m a car girl, born and raised in Michigan, the center of the American auto industry. Our industry has been a ping-pong ball for decades between conflicting political strategies, and it has never been worse. What our industry needs is certainty and a clear path forward.

Every day we delay, global competitors and foreign adversaries race ahead in areas like EVs and autonomous vehicle innovation and deployment. Last year, China overtook the United States as the world’s leading seller of EVs, surpassing American automakers in global EV sales for the first time.

For decades, Congress has worked in a bipartisan way on these issues, and I believe we need to continue to do so. We need to be working with the regulatory agencies to prioritize safety, protect consumer privacy, support innovation, strengthen domestic manufacturing, and ensure American workers are part of the future of this industry.

Safety is not partisan, and I look forward to discussing ways to strengthen auto safety and ensure we have a fully functioning regulator.

We must support long-term investment, protect jobs, and stay competitive in a global marketplace moving full speed toward electrification and advanced vehicle technologies.

We must ensure NHTSA completes its Congressionally mandated rules, including deployment of life-saving drunk driving prevention technology, to prevent avoidable crashes, injuries, and deaths.

We also need to protect consumers from emerging threats, make critical safety technologies accessible to all drivers, and address rising challenges such as catalytic converter theft. And we must ensure safe repair access and protect survivors from misuse of connected vehicle technologies.

Our auto industry has always been a global leader, but this leadership is not guaranteed.

I look forward to today’s discussion and working together with Members of this Committee and all stakeholders — including industry, labor, the dealers, the trial attorneys,

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consumer and safety groups, environmentalists, and many others — to keep Americans safe, advance innovation, and maintain our position at the forefront of the global auto industry.

I yield back.