Senators Release Bipartisan Principles for Self-Driving Vehicles Legislation

June 14 hearing will focus on barriers to testing and deployment

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.), Gary Peters (D-Mich.), and Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) today released principles for bipartisan legislation on self-driving vehicles in advance of tomorrow's Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee hearing, "Paving the Way for Self-Driving Vehicles." The hearing will explore automated vehicle technology and hurdles for testing and deployment in the United States.

"Self-driving vehicle technology will have a transformational impact on highway safety," said **Thune**, who chairs the full committee. "Working on a bipartisan basis, we continue to make progress in writing what we expect will become the first ever changes in federal law helping usher in this new transportation era. These principles underscore our commitment to prioritizing safety, fixing outdated rules, and clarifying the role of federal and state governments."

"Self-driving vehicles will not only dramatically change how we get from place to place, they have the potential to prevent accidents and save thousands of lives,"said **Peters**, a member of the Commerce Committee. "I'm pleased we have compiled this bipartisan framework, which is an important step toward introducing and enacting meaningful legislation that will help the federal government promote the safe development and adoption of self-driving vehicles and ensure the United States remains the world leader in transportation innovation."

"While these principles are just a start, it's my hope we'll find bipartisan consensus on legislation that prioritizes safety and advances the technology," said **Nelson**, the committee's ranking member.

Thune, Peters, and Nelson will continue efforts to finalize legislation. No date or deadline for introduction has been set.

Principles for Bipartisan Legislation on Self-Driving Vehicles:

Self-driving vehicles have the potential to save tens of thousands of lives every year on our nation's highways, improve mobility, and spur enormous economic activity. The legislation aims to direct strong federal leadership that ensures safe self-driving vehicles on the road and reduces regulatory conflicts to the safe and rapid testing and deployment of this transformative technology.

Prioritize Safety: As with conventional vehicles, federal standards will be important to self-driving vehicle safety.

Legislation must consider both the near-term and long-term regulatory oversight of

these vehicles, recognizing that new safety standards governing these vehicles should eventually be set.

Promote Continued Innovation and Reduce Existing Roadblocks: Currently, there is a body of regulations governing conventional vehicles, developed over decades, that does not directly address self-driving vehicles. Developing new standards takes significant time.

Legislation must allow the life-saving safety benefits of self-driving vehicle technology to move forward as new standards development is underway.

Legislation must find ways to preserve and improve safety while addressing incompatibility with old rules that were not written with self-driving vehicles in mind.

Remain Tech Neutral: Self-driving vehicles are likely to take different forms, use diverse technologies, serve consumers with varying capability levels, and follow multiple business models.

Legislation must be technology neutral and avoid favoring the business models of some developers of self-driving vehicles over others.

Reinforce Separate Federal and State Roles: Traditionally, the federal government has regulated the vehicle itself, while states have regulated driver behavior.

Legislation must clarify the responsibilities of federal and state regulators to protect the public and prevent conflicting laws and rules from stifling this new technology.

Legislation must be based on the existing relationship between federal and state regulators and their current separation of authority, but make necessary targeted updates for new challenges posed by the current regulatory environment with respect to self-driving vehicles.

Strengthen Cybersecurity: Cybersecurity should be a top priority for manufacturers of self-driving vehicles and it must be an integral feature of self-driving vehicles from the very beginning of their development.

Legislation must address the connectivity of self-driving vehicles and potential cybersecurity vulnerabilities before they compromise safety.

Educate the Public to Encourage Responsible Adoption of Self-Driving Vehicles: Government and industry should work together to ensure the public understands the differences between conventional and self-driving vehicles.

Legislation must review consumer education models for self-driving vehicles and address how companies can inform the public on what self-driving vehicles can and cannot do based on their level of automation and their individual capabilities.