STATEMENT

OF THE

ALLIANCE FOR AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION

BEFORE THE:

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HEARING TITLE:

" Listen Here: Why Americans Value AM Radio"

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PRESENTED BY:

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ALLIANCE FOR AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION

Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Matsui and distinguished members of the Committee: on behalf of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation (Auto Innovators) and our members, thank you for the opportunity to appear at this hearing today to share our perspectives on AM radios in motor vehicles and consumer access to emergency alerts.

The Alliance for Automotive Innovation was formed in 2020 to serve as the singular, authoritative, and respected voice of the automotive industry in the United States.

The automotive ecosystem drives $1 trillion into the U.S. economy each year. That's nearly 5% of GDP and accounts for almost 10 million jobs coast to coast.

The auto sector is the country's largest manufacturing sector. Every direct job in vehicle manufacturing supports 10.5 additional American jobs. Every $1 spent in vehicle manufacturing creates additional $3.45 in economic value[1].

As the leading voice of the auto industry, we appreciate the continued engagement with your offices regarding consumer safety and the importance of consumer access to emergency alerts in motor vehicles.

Our mission is to deliver a cleaner, **safer**, and smarter automotive future.

Auto Innovators and its members take the safety of consumers and the public seriously. We are committed to ensuring drivers have access to free, public alerts and safety warnings through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)[2] system.

It's also a fact that access to emergency alerts under IPAWS is not limited to just one mode of communication, in this case, analog AM radio. IPAWS was created "to provide integrated services and capabilities to federal, state, territorial, tribal and local authorities that enable them to effectively alert and warn their respective communities via multiple communications methods."[3] These multiple communication methods mentioned in IPAWS' mission are through mobile phones via Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), radio (analog/digital/satellite) and television via the Emergency Alert System (EAS), and on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio.[4] The system was designed to provide redundant alert mechanisms to ensure the public has access to multiple outlets to receive these critical alerts. The

[1] Alliance for Automotive Innovation, Driving Force, November 30, 2022, https://www.autosinnovate.org/EconomicImpactReport.

[2] Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS), FEMA.gov, 1 Jan. 2000, www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system.

[3] IPAWS' Mission and Initiatives, FEMA, September 28, 2022. https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system/governance#:~:text=IPAWS%20Mission,communities%20via%20multiple%20communications%20methods

[4] Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (n 2)

intent is not for the public to rely on a sole source to receive the alerts but to create a "net" of sources in which the public can receive them. In other words, the more the better.

Importantly, while access to emergency alerts is not limited to vehicles, drivers today are able to take advantage of the IPAWS safety network, regardless of whether those vehicles are equipped with a factory-installed analog AM radio receiver. Vehicles can receive EAS alerts through AM digital (or HD radio), FM (analog/digital) and satellite radio. WEA mobile alerts are also available in the vehicle through phones connected to Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Setting aside analog AM radio receivers, vehicles today offer different options for consumers to receive critical emergency alerts. Consumer trends show that today's cars come with many new tech options from the factory, including Apple CarPlay (93%), Android Auto (91%) and Satellite Radio (86%) [5].

With technology and new methods of reaching the public, Congress and federal agencies have taken actions to modernize analog AM radio and the national alert system to ensure that these systems can adapt and include emerging technologies.

- In 2015, Congress passed S. 1180, the "IPAWS Modernization Act", which directed FEMA to modernize and futureproof the system. The legislation recognized technological innovations and the need for the national alert system to be able to incorporate them. FEMA recognized this and highlights within its "IPAWS Process Map Playbook" released in February 2021, where "emerging technologies" are one of the alert sources listed.
- The FCC's October 2020 Report and Order on "All Digital AM Broadcasting; Revitalization of the AM Radio Service," paved the way for analog AM radio stations to operate using all-digital broadcast signals. The FCC noted challenges with analog AM radio having "struggled for decades with a steady decline in listenership caused by interference and reception issues and the availability of higher fidelity alternatives." This action would address the challenges and, "advance the Commission's goal of improving and modernizing the AM radio service and thereby help ensure the future of this important service." [6]
- The IPAWS Program Management Office also emphasized this in its Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026 as it points out that one of the challenges for the system is that "the public is moving away from radio and broadcast/cable television as the primary channels for news and information."

Technology advancements and the way the public consumes information constantly evolves and IPAWS has made it a goal to find ways to communicate with the public however and wherever they receive information.

[5] Wards Intelligence "2022 Factory Installed Electronic Equipment," March 3, 2023.

[6] U.S. Federal Communications Commission, FCC 20-154 Report and Order, pg. 2, October 27, 2020. https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-20-154A1.pdf

There are many reasons why automakers make decisions in vehicle design and features. These include everything from evaluating technical challenges or considerations to market expectations and consumer demand. This will vary among manufacturers, but each makes decisions based on what they believe will result in the best product to meet their consumers' expectations. These factors, coupled with the numerous regulations on automobiles, dictate the decisions that automakers make when designing and constructing vehicles, prioritizing safety, efficiency, and consumer preferences.

At the end of the day, the auto industry is pro-innovation. We are committed to ensuring drivers have access to free, public alerts and safety warnings through IPAWS. Both the federal government and the automotive industry recognize that the ways in which consumers receive information will change over time. As innovation in the automotive industry continues and new technologies are developed, the federal government and industry must work together to modernize IPAWS and continue to incorporate innovative technologies. Doing so will ensure we collectively provide the best, most capable and resilient technologies to the public while also strengthening public and safety.

The auto industry has long been an economic engine for the nation that millions of workers depend on for their livelihoods. The industry is poised to remain the bedrock of U.S. innovation and manufacturing for decades to come. Realizing this potential, however, requires collaboration, cooperation, and creativity among all stakeholders.

On behalf of Auto Innovators and our member companies, I look forward to working with both Congress and the Administration to foster a competitive and innovative technological landscape that serves the interests, and safety, of all Americans.