



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Haley Stevens (D-MI)
of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology

Research and Technology Subcommittee Field Hearing:
Smart Mobility: It's a Community Issue
Friday, October 25, 2019

Good morning. It is truly significant to be gathered here today in Livonia, Michigan. I'm delighted to host today's hearing and extend the warmest welcome and thank you to my esteemed colleagues, Congressman Bill Foster of Illinois and Congressman Michael Cloud of Texas.

We thank our Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson and Ranking Member Jim Baird who could not join us for the hearing but are supportive partners of this effort.

We also recognize the recently departed Congressman Elijah Cummings of Maryland. Mr. Cummings was a known and calming presence in the halls of Congress. Reflecting on his legacy and his wishes for our Congress, Elijah would be doing exactly what we are doing here today – figuring out ways to advance his country and help his district.

He had a specific emphasis on our future, incredible talents, and voice that spoke truth. As his body lay in state yesterday in the Capitol, my colleagues and I said goodbye to a man who worked up until his last living moments on this earth.

May we all be so lucky to witness such service to others and love of the country we call home.

We are here today to examine the use of smart technology to improve the ability of small cities and suburban communities to provide safe and efficient mobility solutions.

Michigan's 11th district has been on the forefront of these innovations, playing a key role with our industry leaders and best-in-class workforce, so it's only fitting that gather here today to discuss how this technology can be made more effective through collaboration between public, private, and academic stakeholders.

These are some of the questions that compel the work of Congress – how to effectively use government to yield the best results for regional economies like ours.

Recent developments in connected and autonomous vehicles, combined with increasing computing power and travel data, have enabled rapid advances in regional planning and mobility. Smart mobility technologies have already begun to shape how Americans move around and live. They are being used to reduce traffic congestion and cut emissions. A 2019 study by Texas A&M University found that national gridlock costs our country \$166 billion per year.

The most recent highway bill, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, the FAST Act, provides some funding for smart mobility, including \$60 million per year for the new Advanced Transportation and Congestion Mitigation Deployment Program and support for several University Transportation Centers focused on improving the mobility of people and goods. While these investments are important, like most of our transportation and infrastructure investments, we must do much more to meet the scale of the challenge.

Smart mobility technologies also have the potential to move us towards the goal of a society with zero traffic fatalities. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced this week that overall highway fatalities decreased by 2.4% in 2018, the second year of declines. Which still means that nearly 40,000 people lost their lives on our roadways. The same report showed that pedestrian fatalities increased 3.4% and bicyclists fatalities increased 6.3 %.

Finally, these technologies have the potential to provide affordable and reliable transportation to basic services like healthcare and employment for those living with disabilities, older adults, and others who do not have access to individual transportation.

We need to start having a broader discussion about how smart technology can be applied in all communities. What works within major city limits may not work in the suburbs or in small towns in which mobility options are limited. This will involve working with our communities including city councils, township boards, and county commissions to develop mobility solutions with the unique needs of our communities in mind.

Research is essential to realizing this goal. In addition to supporting near term deployment and testing of new technologies, it is important to invest in long-term research that looks beyond the horizon of today's capabilities. When America becomes a leader in the equitable development of mobility solutions, we will yet again set the standards and norms the rest of the world will follow.

Welcome to this insightful dialogue on the transformations and capabilities of 21st century mobility technologies in the home of American transportation.