

Jeff Perry, Director, Public Policy, General Motors
Pennsylvania Joint Transportation Committees
Senate Bill 427 Testimony
March 21, 2017

Good morning. Thank you, Senator Rafferty, Representative Taylor, and members of the Transportation Committees for the opportunity to speak with you today about Senate Bill 427. My name is Jeff Perry and I am the Director of Public Policy at General Motors.

It has been an honor to serve on behalf of General Motors as a contributing member of the Pennsylvania PennDOT Autonomous Vehicle Task Force, and we greatly appreciate the opportunity to collaborate alongside with fellow stakeholders, both public and private. As you know, the goal of the task force is to create a framework in Pennsylvania that strikes a balance between safety and innovation, while creating a clear pathway that elevates the state as a leader in the responsible development of self-driving cars. GM is a strong advocate for legislation that does just that by paving the way for self-driving vehicle testing and deployment here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Safety is General Motor's number one priority; I'd like to recognize and thank Senator Vulakovich for placing safety as the foundation for Senate Bill 427. Considering that over 90% of the crashes on our roads today are the result of human error, and in 2016 more than 40,000 traffic fatalities occurred on our nation's roads – a 6% increase over 2015 and the highest number of fatalities in almost a decade, safety is, in fact, a driving force behind the self-driving vehicle technology innovation, bringing with it the potential to save thousands of lives each year.

As with any new technology, there are certainly hurdles to overcome, and significant collaboration will be needed for us to realize the tremendous safety potential of this technology. But the development of self-driving cars provides many other potential societal and environmental benefits. People enjoy and desire the convenience of personal transportation, but not everyone wants to or can own or operate a vehicle. Self-driving cars provide new segments of society new opportunities and options for easier, more convenient transportation. The availability of self-driving cars opens up opportunities for Americans who cannot

drive a car or do not have access to effective mass transit. Self-driving cars can expand economic and transportation options for people with disabilities, seniors and communities cut off from other modes of transport.

At General Motors, we are committed to a safe transition to self-driving cars and have focused on developing a suite of technologies that range from active safety features, to fully autonomous vehicles. Our innovative technology in our cars today provides many safety features including full-speed range adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assist, forward collision warning, and collision mitigation braking. Autonomous technology represents the next logical step forward in the journey already underway to make transportation as safe as possible.

But before we deploy self-driving cars at the highest levels of self-driving automation, we need to capture and develop real-world experience in a safe environment. That is why it is vital that legislation is enacted to provide for the safe testing and deployment of self-driving technology. We believe that existing legal barriers to the safe testing and deployment of autonomous vehicles should be removed.

For example, Pennsylvania law requires a human driver in the vehicle at all times, making deployment of self-driving cars impossible. Other states have already acted to make it possible for these cars to be tested and deployed in a driverless configuration.

We believe that self-driving car legislation should encourage and foster innovation while also ensuring that safety is the top priority. To that end, we are committed to working with the sponsor, members of these committees, the PennDOT AV Task Force, and other stakeholders on legislative language that could improve the current provisions in Senate Bill 427.

This is an incredibly exciting time for the future of mobility and as we move toward this new technology, GM's priority is, and always will be, the safety of our passengers.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any of your questions.