



**U.S. Department  
of Transportation**

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation

Assistant Secretary  
for Governmental Affairs

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. Blunt Rochester:

Thank you for your letter regarding the rulemakings, reports, and research initiatives Congress has mandated of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The U.S. Department of Transportation and NHTSA appreciate the opportunity to provide you with additional details about our work to enhance motor vehicle and roadway safety for all Americans.

NHTSA has been working diligently on its safety mission by focusing on these Congressional mandates in addition to its other safety priorities: a current regulatory portfolio of dozens of rulemakings, technical research projects necessary for regulatory actions, reports to Congress, technical studies, grant program changes and regulations, guidance documents, and data system changes. The Department views every one of these efforts, especially Congressional mandates, as important. As of January 2020, NHTSA has completed 42 mandates in both the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

Several legal requirements affect the timing of NHTSA rulemakings including the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and the Administrative Procedure Act. To meet those requirements and because NHTSA rulemakings can impact the safety of the traveling public, NHTSA must draft rulemakings carefully based on thorough research and rigorous data. Of the remaining mandatory rulemakings, many must be preceded by complex and time-consuming technical research before there is sufficient data to support the rulemaking action.

Consistent with laws governing NHTSA's rulemaking process, NHTSA initiates a rulemaking when it has sufficient data to do so. For example, foundational research provided sufficient data for NHTSA to publish Notices of Proposed Rulemaking for Side Impact Test Procedures for Child Restraint Systems (MAP-21), Motorcoach Rollover Structural Integrity (MAP-21), and Replica Vehicles (FAST Act), and an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Rear Seat Belt Reminder Systems (MAP-21). In the case of the other mandates, NHTSA is in the process of drafting a notice for publication or still engaged in conducting foundational research or analysis. The Department is committed to a data-driven process to support

The Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester

March 11, 2020

Page 2

actions that enhance public safety, without compromising innovation and while complying with applicable legal requirements.

NHTSA has the resources it requires to fulfill its safety mission, through effective research and regulatory development assisted by a professional staff with the expertise to succeed in these efforts. Its employees strive to carry out the mission to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce the economic costs of traffic crashes. In particular, NHTSA has prioritized building in-house safety expertise in a rapidly evolving technology environment, enhancing employee training, and offering career advancing opportunities. NHTSA is currently finalizing vacancy recruitments within its Rulemaking Office.

NHTSA is encouraged that traffic fatalities are declining. As new challenges arise, NHTSA will continue to advance safety through research, public education, rulemaking, enforcement, and partnerships with States.

If you have any questions about this response, please do not hesitate to contact me or the NHTSA Office of Governmental Affairs, Policy, & Strategic Planning at (202) 366-1836. A similar response has been sent to each cosigner of your letter.

Sincerely,



Adam J. Sullivan  
Assistant Secretary for  
Governmental Affairs