



Partnership for
Transportation Innovation
& Opportunity

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science,
& Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science,
& Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Partnership for Transportation Innovation and Opportunity (PTIO), I write to express support for Section 5021 of the Surface Transportation Investment Act of 2021, “Transportation Workforce Development.” PTIO is appreciative of the provision’s research-based, consensus-driven approach in considering how to prepare the workforce for roles in the intelligent transportation technologies sector, including those specific to autonomous vehicle (AV) technology.

PTIO – whose members include **The American Trucking Associations, Daimler, FedEx, Ford, Lyft, Toyota Motor North America, UPS, Waymo, May Mobility, and Locomotion AI** – was formed in June 2018 with a commitment to advance AV technology in ways that improve quality of life and economic opportunity for all Americans. Our top priority is to promote policies and programs that prepare workers for new career pathways in the AV ecosystem while ensuring productivity enhancements arising from AVs benefit every American, including those whose jobs may evolve alongside the technology.

As a critical component of the United States’ intelligent transportation system, AVs will improve the way we connect people, goods, and services, subsequently yielding positive impacts across the economy ranging from job creation to an increase in Gross Domestic Product.¹ As AV technology continues to develop but is not yet deployed on a widespread basis, lawmakers have the opportunity to pursue policies that allow AV technology to flourish while concurrently engaging industry, academic leaders, educators, workers, and other interested stakeholders to understand what AVs will mean for jobs across occupations as applications of the technology continue to evolve. Public policies and private sector programs must reflect this understanding to meet their desired objectives.

By directing the National Academy of Sciences to develop an intelligent transportation technologies workforce needs assessment addressing issues related to recruiting, retaining, and developing a skilled workforce pipeline while additionally establishing a working group to develop an implementation plan based on the assessment’s findings, Section 5021 takes a research-based, consensus-driven approach to further our shared goal of identifying effective methods and programs for preparing and empowering Americans to secure opportunities in the

¹ US Department of Transportation, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, “[Macroeconomic Impacts of Automated Driving Systems in Long-Haul Trucking](#),” January 18 2021.



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intelligent transportation system economy. We additionally appreciate the section's acknowledgement that registered apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs are important components to developing a skilled workforce. However, PTIO urges the working group to consider other quality-assured work-based learning programs outside of the registered apprenticeship space as additional strategies for re-skilling incumbent workers and attracting new talent in the transportation sector. The National Academy of Sciences and working group should additionally assess curricular development around training Americans for roles in emerging and innovative transportation technologies.

Thank you for your continued leadership on these important issues. We are eager to continue working with this Committee and others of relevant jurisdiction as we strive to ensure AV technology flourishes in the United States while concurrently pursuing policies and programs that prepare the workforce for the opportunities and changes on the horizon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Branson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathryn Branson
Executive Director
Partnership for Transportation Innovation and Opportunity