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January 29, 2024

Ms. Sophie Shulman  
Deputy Administrator  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Deputy Administrator Shulman:

I am writing to request that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration take action against auto manufacturers that exclude AM radio reception from their motor vehicles. I urge you to require them to display a safety warning on the car window “sticker price” that states: “Warning: No AM Radio. Vehicle Unsafe in Certain Emergencies.” This safety warning should be required by auto manufacturers until H.R.3413 (S.1669) — the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act of 2023, requiring life-saving AM radio reception in all motor vehicles — is passed into law.

AM radio is the backbone of America’s National Public Warning System, which provides the public with emergency-alert and warning information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) during natural disasters, extreme weather conditions, chemical spills, health crises, and other emergencies. AM radio is known for its ability to provide broadcasts that can reach remote areas, hundreds if not thousands of miles away from stations. Thanks to its lower frequencies and longer wavelengths, AM can travel longer distances than FM or satellite radio signals, and pass through buildings — making AM radio a more reliable means of communication.

As you know, the federal government, via FEMA, has invested significantly in backup power and antenna hardening to protect AM radio and ensure its functionality, even in the most significant crises.

The importance of AM radio during large-scale emergencies cannot be overstated. It has, without a doubt, saved lives and kept our communities informed in moments of crisis. When cell phones are out, the Internet is cut off, or televisions do not work because of electricity or power outages, you can still turn on your AM radio in your car. In fact, AM radio is so important to public safety that seven former FEMA administrators wrote to the Department of Transportation last year urging the federal government to ensure that AM radio remains in all cars and trucks, because it

is often the last line of communication for the public.<sup>1</sup> It's also the first line of communication for many Americans — 47 million, or 20 percent of the radio-listening public, tune into AM every day.<sup>2</sup>

My constituents in New Jersey's Fifth District are uniquely aware of the importance of AM radio in a crisis. During the aftermath of 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy, not to mention countless storms and floods, AM radio provided a crucial lifeline for life-saving information.<sup>3</sup>

However, despite the critical public safety function of AM radio, many electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers have stopped including it in their vehicles. EV makers don't want to spend a little more to keep us safe in a national emergency using existing technology that would allow electric cars to have AM radio. That is why I am proud to lead the bipartisan AM for Every Vehicle Act in the House, with the current support of more than 200 Members of Congress, to ensure that all auto manufacturers include AM radio in their vehicles to protect public safety. Until we succeed in passing this critical legislation, I urge you to be a partner in protecting the public and ensure that automotive consumers are fully aware of the risks associated with forgoing AM radio reception.

In an emergency, it's critical that our local, state, and federal governments can quickly and clearly get important information to all communities — and we know that AM radio has always been most reliable. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,



Josh Gottheimer  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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<sup>1</sup> Electric Vehicles Need AM Radio, Former Emergency Officials Argue, *The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 27, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/electric-vehicles-need-am-radio-former-emergency-officials-argue-9e69e297>.

<sup>2</sup> In a Future Filled With Electric Cars, AM Radio May Be Left Behind, *New York Times*, Dec. 10, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/10/business/media/am-radio-cars.html>.

<sup>3</sup> After Hurricane Sandy, People Flock to Radio for Information, *New York Times*, Nov. 18, 2021, <https://archive.nytimes.com/mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/18/after-hurricane-sandy-people-flock-to-radio-for-information/>.