

Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association

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Via Regulations.gov

December 18, 2017

Nathaniel Beuse
Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety Research
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Room W48-340
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: Automated Driving Systems: Voluntary Safety Self-Assessments;
Public Workshop [Docket No. NHTSA-2017-0086]**

Dear Mr. Beuse:

The Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA) is the leading international trade association in the fast-changing mobility industry, and represents 1,000 vehicle suppliers that manufacture and remanufacture components and systems for use in passenger cars and heavy trucks as new original equipment (OE) and aftermarket parts to service and repair vehicles on the road today.¹ Our members are key developers of advanced, transformative technologies that enable safer, smarter, and more efficient vehicles. Collectively, these technologies are increasingly becoming available on a range of vehicles with the capacity to provide significant safety benefits and lay the foundation to an automated vehicle fleet that could substantially reduce traffic fatalities.

On Nov. 14, 2017, MEMA submitted comments to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) on the agency's guidance document "Automated Driving Systems 2.0: A Vision for Safety." Today, we take this opportunity to submit our feedback specifically on the Voluntary Safety Self-Assessments to reiterate for this docket's record our previous comments on this subject.

The excerpt below is taken from MEMA's Nov. 14 comments, which are found in the ADS Guidance docket.²

Voluntary Safety Self-Assessments

Clarity on Voluntary Submissions – First, MEMA appreciates the reassurance and clarification from NHTSA that (1) the VSSAs are voluntary – although, strongly encouraged – “concise” publications; (2) there are no requirements or means to compel an entity to submit a VSSA; and, (3) there is no federal VSSA “approval process.” Again, at this stage in the development of ADS-related technology, MEMA agrees that these are appropriate

¹ MEMA represents its members through four divisions: Automotive Aftermarket Suppliers Association (AASA); Heavy Duty Manufacturers Association (HDMA); Motor & Equipment Remanufacturers Association (MERA); and, Original Equipment Suppliers Association (OESA). The motor vehicle components manufacturing industry is the largest direct employer of manufacturing jobs in the United States directly employing more than 871,000 Americans, generating a total employment impact of 4.26 million jobs and contributing nearly \$435 billion to the U.S. GDP.

² MEMA Comments, NHTSA-2017-0082-2872, page 4-6, Nov. 14, 2017.



parameters for the Guidance, primarily because they provide entities with the flexibility to customize their assessments to address the various applicable safety elements without divulging proprietary information or being constrained by submission timetables.

However, MEMA would like to note that submission of these voluntary publications is also subject to the unique business relationships during the ADS testing phase. In addition to testing solely conducted by an individual supplier, sometimes the evaluations are done in conjunction with OEM customers or as a joint venture with another supplier or other entity. In a similar vein, testing of commercial vehicles ADS-related components are often a collaborative effort between several suppliers and an OEM – and, in some cases, a commercial fleet customer may also be involved. However, under the current Guidance, each company could submit duplicative VSSA information concerning these vehicles, which will require additional effort and coordination to ensure the objectives are met and clearly stated. Below we provide further comments on these issues, specifically addressing and reiterating the overall role of suppliers in ADS product development and deployment to their OEM customers.

VSSAs vis-à-vis Testing and Evaluation – During testing, a system is adjusted, tweaked, and refined – sometimes within hours and days, and, other times, over a period of weeks and months. Thus, MEMA is pleased to see that NHTSA is allowing for overall voluntary flexibility in submitting VSSAs.

MEMA also appreciates that NHTSA encourages entities to voluntarily publish their VSSAs to provide transparency for the public confidence and the flexibility for entities to submit the appropriate levels of information without risk of revealing proprietary intellectual property or other sensitive information. MEMA further appreciates NHTSA's recognition and agreement with 2016 FAVP comments from MEMA and others that some of the safety elements are simply not applicable during the evaluation and test phases. This offers entities, whose products are in the test phase, the flexibility to indicate which safety elements are relevant to the VSSA. This option is important, particularly for suppliers who conduct ongoing testing of their various components, modules, and systems.

Therefore, in its Guidance, NHTSA offers entities the opportunity to include an acknowledgement stating that an “element is not applicable.” MEMA strongly supports this option because it is indeed true – often, many of the safety elements noted in the Guidance, are not relevant during the testing phase. For example, elements like “Consumer Education and Training” and “Human Machine Interface” either are not relevant or are addressed at later stages during validation.

While an entity can indicate that an “element is not applicable” for some of the Guidance's safety elements, since these VSSA publications are intended to be high-level public documents, the optics of a VSSA with these elements not addressed may be taken out of context and misunderstood by the general public, including regulators and

consumers alike. Considering this potential misunderstanding, MEMA encourages NHTSA to make this point clearly and explicitly in future iterations of the Guidance.

Supplier Role – Just as there are key differences between testing and production vehicles, there are also key differences among the various entities involved in the manufacturing, development, testing, and deployment of ADS. Specifically, MEMA re-emphasizes what we asserted in our 2016 FAVP comments and reiterates that NHTSA should acknowledge the different roles of suppliers and OEMs in the Guidance. OE suppliers most often do not have visibility into the full scope of issues to properly assess performance once a supplier’s component, module, or system has been integrated into a production vehicle. Details regarding how its specific equipment interacts with other components or systems in a production vehicle are not always known to the supplier. When developing a product, a supplier may create and develop that system independent of their OEM customer or, a supplier may create and develop that system collaboratively either with another supplier and/or with the OEM. In short, once the OEM has integrated ADS technology into a production vehicle’s system, there are many factors that are unknown to the supplier. Likewise, an OEM may also make modifications over time (e.g. over-the-air update) where, again, a supplier would not know the conditions of how an OEM updated the integrated HAV system.

Public Online Resource for VSSAs – As the Guidance and self-assessments are voluntary and because there is a public interest in the information offered, MEMA believes that a public website containing links to publicly disclosed VSSAs would be beneficial. This website could serve as a neutral database to securely upload and modify the VSSA, and further improve the accessibility and transparency of the information as a one-stop reference for the public. MEMA believes this resource would be a very efficient way to manage a wide array of information. Thus, MEMA encourages NHTSA to seek public feedback to evaluate this proposal, including on how best to achieve and implement this idea.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Suppliers are committed to improving vehicle safety and efficiency. Our members are leading the way by developing the technologies necessary to reduce fatalities and injuries. MEMA supports the iterative, transparent approach that the USDOT and NHTSA have undertaken, and we will continue to be part of the public discourse on this subject. For any additional information or questions, please contact me at lmerino@mema.org or (202) 312-9249.

Respectfully submitted,



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