

**Testimony Prepared for
Deputy Administrator Heidi King
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
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Good afternoon Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Blumenthal, and members of the Subcommittee.

Our conversation today on the recall of the deadly Takata air bags could not occur at a more important time. This unprecedented challenge confronts all of us. Each of us in this room share the goal of protecting public safety.

Manufacturers have made progress in reaching consumers and persuading them to bring their vehicles in for a free repair, but progress is uneven and overall completion rates are not where we want them to be.

The challenge is unprecedented, but there are positive signs. NHTSA and the Independent Monitor established under the Consent Order have successfully encouraged vehicle manufacturers to adopt innovative outreach best practices—including texting, social media, and door-to-door canvassing—that have proven effective with some consumers who were unresponsive to traditional outreach efforts.

NHTSA's Coordinated Remedy Order has targeted replacement inflators to those consumers with the highest risk so that inflators that pose the greatest danger get repaired first.

The threat is not static. As time passes, continued exposure to heat and humidity will increase the risk of injury or death to those friends and neighbors driving cars with the old, dangerous air bags.

Everyone is encouraged to visit NHTSA.gov and check to see if they have an open recall so they can bring their vehicle to their local dealer for a free repair. They can also call 888-327-4236.

I ask each of you to support our shared goal of public safety, and help raise consumer awareness of how important it is that vehicle owners check NHTSA.gov to learn of open recalls, call their dealership, and complete their free air bag replacement.

As members of this Subcommittee know, defective Takata air bags pose a significant threat to safety. Currently, the Takata recall involves 19 vehicle manufacturers and approximately 50 million Takata air bag inflators in an estimated 37 million vehicles in the United States alone. To date, over 21 million defective air bags have been repaired.

The recall will continue to be deployed in phases, which means that more vehicles will be included in the recall in the next couple of years. The program prioritizes and phases in the recalls to not only accelerate the repairs, but to ensure that the highest-risk vehicles are fixed first.

Prioritizing repairs does mean some vehicle owners might have to wait for replacement air bags. That is deeply frustrating. But it also means that parts are available immediately to fix vehicles that pose a greater risk.

While overseeing the historic recall of 50 million air bag inflators across the United States, NHTSA has continued to investigate Takata air bags, including industry testing of parts, and is closely monitoring the vehicle manufacturers' recall efforts. This continued vigilance allows NHTSA to make sure we are focusing on those vehicles that pose the highest risk to safety.

A recent example of NHTSA's continued vigilance is the "do not drive" recall by two manufacturers. This "do not drive" recall followed a tragic death resulting from improper deployment of a recalled air bag. The investigation revealed that there was a previously unidentified issue that called into question whether there was additional risk associated with a group of air bags. In consultation with NHTSA, the manufacturers escalated the recall.

At this critical stage, we are considering novel ways to reach consumers and improve response rates. We know that consumers may not be aware of the risks and we appreciate your help in raising awareness. Air bag replacement is free, and every consumer should check NHTSA.gov to learn whether their car, truck, or van is subject to the recall.

Thank you again for inviting me to be with you today to raise awareness among the public of this very serious threat to roadway safety. I look forward to your questions.

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