

June 20, 2023

The Honorable Josh Gottheimer United States House of Representatives 203 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Kean, Jr. United States House of Representatives 251 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Gottheimer and Kean:

AARP, which advocates for the more than 100 million Americans age 50 and older, supports the bipartisan *AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act*, H.R. 3413, and urges Congress to pass this vital safety measure into law. We appreciate your leadership on this important legislation to ensure that automakers maintain AM radios in their vehicles.

AM radio plays a highly valuable role in the lives of so many Americans. Adults age 50 and above represent the largest share of AM radio listeners, but they also represent those most at risk from disaster events. In these situations, AM radio is a critical element of the emergency response system. Older people need all possible channels of communication available to them to ensure their safety.

The vital nature of AM radio was recently expressed in a letter from seven former Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administrators who stated that AM radio serves as a linchpin of the infrastructure behind the federal National Public Warning System. According to FEMA, more than 75 radio stations, most of which operate on the AM band and cover at least 90 percent of the U.S. population, are equipped with backup communications equipment and generators that allow them to continue broadcasting information to the public during and after an emergency.

Older adults are also overrepresented in rural areas where wireless and broadband connections are limited or nonexistent. AM radio connects millions of these older rural residents to their communities through targeted programming, including the latest local news and weather. Importantly, AM radio broadcasts are free and can be easily accessed during emergencies, whether at home or on the road.

The AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act would ensure that AM radios remain in vehicles by requiring the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to issue a rule that requires automakers to maintain AM broadcast radio in their vehicles without an additional fee. It would

also require disclosure of the absence of AM radio access for vehicles sold before the rule takes effect. Lastly, it would direct the Government Accountability Office to study whether alternative communication systems could fully replicate the reach and effectiveness of AM broadcast radio for alerting the public to emergencies.

Thank you again for your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation to ensure that AM radio remains in vehicles. AARP looks forward to working with you to advance this legislation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact Debra Alvarez in our Government Affairs office at (202) 434-3814.

Sincerely,

Bill Sweeney

Senior Vice President Government Affairs