Dear Senator Stabenow,

We are writing you today as the Board of Directors of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) on behalf of agricultural and rural broadcast stations and networks across America. Founded in 1944, NAFB is dedicated to serving the interests of the agricultural community. Farm broadcasters provide an invaluable service to producers and the agricultural community in rural America. Through this letter, we hope to express NAFB members’ overwhelming support of broadcast radio and to cast a spotlight on the actions some automakers are taking to remove radio from their vehicles – especially AM radio.

In rural America, AM radio is critical for those without reliable cellular or broadband access. Farmers in the field and on rural roadways, not connected to cellular or broadband, also turn to AM radio for the latest weather updates, crop reports, local information, and entertainment. For farmers and ranchers, radio continues to be the primary source of daily agricultural news for listeners throughout the year. In fact, on average, ag radio consumers are listening for at least one hour on a typical weekday; more than 76% listen to the radio for agriculture markets, news, weather, and other information more than five days a week. Listeners to ag radio consistently rate their farm broadcasters high in credibility, accuracy, and timeliness for information.

Rural areas across the country are subject to extreme weather conditions such as tornados, flooding, droughts, wildfires, and hurricanes. When these extreme weather events occur and both the power and cell service are out, AM radio becomes a literal lifeline for rural Americans. As the backbone of the Emergency Alert System, the car radio often is the only way for people to get information, sometimes for days at a time.

As the professional trade association representing the interests of farm broadcasters, the agricultural community, and rural America, we are deeply concerned about the action some automakers have taken to remove AM radio from their vehicles. Of the top 20 automakers producing vehicles in the United States, eight of them have already removed AM broadcast from their electric vehicles, undermining the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) system for delivering critical public safety information to the public. One major automaker, Ford, has already announced its intent to remove AM radio from their entire fleet of non-commercial vehicles beginning in 2024.

We ask you help us convey to auto manufacturers the importance of AM broadcast radio to America’s farmers and Americans living in rural communities across the United States. Removing AM radio from vehicles will put into serious jeopardy an important lifeline and source of information to rural America, not just during times of emergency events but every single day.
Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to urge auto manufacturers to keep this vital service as part of their vehicles.

Sincerely,

2023 NAFB Board of Directors

Joe Gill
KASM Radio
Albany, Minnesota

Carah Hart
Brownfield Ag News
Jefferson City, Missouri

Jeff Nalley
Cromwell Ag Radio Network
Utica, Kentucky

Gardner Hatch
Woodruff
Cottage Grove, Minnesota

Shannon Yokley
Missouri Wines
Jefferson City, Missouri

Delaney Howell
Agricultural News Daily
Rhodes, Iowa

KC Sheperd
Radio Oklahoma Ag Network
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Brent Adams
Rural Strong Media
Charlestown, Indiana

Augie Aga
Northern Ag Network
Billings, Montana

Amy Biehl-Owens
KRVN Rural Radio Network
Lexington, Nebraska

Anita Vanderwert
Brownfield Ag News
Jefferson City, Missouri

Tom Brand
National Association of Farm Broadcasting
Platte City, Missouri
PRESERVING AM RADIO IN VEHICLES

THE ISSUE
As auto brands introduce more electric vehicles (EVs) into the market to meet growing consumer and clean energy demands, the availability of AM radio is declining or being eliminated altogether. This is due to electromagnetic interference causing static and limited coverage with AM radio in EVs. Despite well-known mitigation solutions, some automakers have stopped putting AM radios in their dashboards. Among them so far are Audi, BMW, Porsche, Tesla, Volvo, Volkswagen, and Ford.

AM RADIO ESSENTIAL FOR CRITICAL EMERGENCIES
AM radio is one of the critical ways federal, state, and local officials communicate with the public during natural disasters and other emergencies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stated the success of the national public warning system hinges on the use of AM radio due to the distances its signal carries and its resiliency during catastrophic events. Although many automakers suggested other communication tools like internet radio could replace broadcast AM radio, in an emergency, drivers might not have access to the internet and could miss important safety information and updates.

AM radio serves a vital role in our nation’s emergency infrastructure as the backbone of the Emergency Alert System. When the power goes out and cell networks are down, the car radio often is the only way for people to get information, sometimes for days at a time.

IMPORTANCE OF AM RADIO TO THE AG COMMUNITY AND RURAL AREAS REMAINS HIGH
Radio is the most used source of daily agribusiness information. Farmers and ranchers depend on AM radio to obtain information about topics such as weather, markets, ag news, ag commentary, and local events. AM radio is especially critical in areas where reliable broadband has yet to be deployed as well as in areas where FM signals don’t extend. AM radio gives a larger coverage area and is often the only stable form of communication for rural areas.

AM RADIO MATTERS TO ALL COMMUNITIES, IS STILL VALUED BY AUTOMOTIVE CONSUMERS
There are more than 4,470 licensed AM stations across the country. Of those, 1,500+ provide agriculture programming. It is clear AM radio plays a vital role in connecting communities with stations that serve these audiences with niche and in-language programming. Urban and suburban residents rely on AM radio for news, weather, sports, and more. Consumers still desire AM in-car listening. Thirty-three percent of new car buyers say AM radio is a very important feature in a vehicle — higher than dedicated Wi-Fi (31 percent), SiriusXM satellite radio (27 percent), and personal assistants such as Google Assistant or Amazon Alexa.
THIRD-PARTY RESEARCH PROVES RADIO IMPORTANCE TO FARMERS, RANCHERS

In 2021, the National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) partnered with Aimpoint Research to execute a nationwide, year-long tracking study of approximately 800 farmers across four waves (quarters) throughout the year who listen to ag radio programming.

### Ag radio listeners most often listen to AM and FM radio for ag information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radio bands</th>
<th>Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 3</th>
<th>Wave 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Total farmers who listen to ag radio: Wave 1 (n=202), Wave 2 (n=197), Wave 3 (n=200), Wave 4 (n=195)

On which of the following radio bands do you listen to farm news, weather, markets, and ag information during this time of year?

Listeners report receiving a variety of topical information from ag radio; however, they are primarily listening to/for **agricultural markets, commodity prices, weather, and local/regional ag news**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 3</th>
<th>Wave 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag markets/commodity prices</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag weather</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/regional ag news</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World ag/trade news</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm commentary</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insights from Washington, D.C./policy updates</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New products: seed, equipment, technology</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture innovation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For those farmers and ranchers who listen to ag radio, it continues to be the primary source of daily ag news for its listeners throughout the year. Listeners most often are listening to AM and FM radio.

On average, ag radio consumers are listening for at least one hour on a typical weekday.

Ag radio listeners consistently rate their farm broadcasters high in credibility, accuracy, and timeliness of information.