



GROW AMERICA Act: Improving Transportation Safety

The **GROW AMERICA Act** will take critical steps to safeguard the traveling public. The **GROW AMERICA Act** addresses unacceptable safety vulnerabilities on our transportation network – vulnerabilities that pose a potential threat to the health and welfare of all American workers and families.

- In 2013, vehicle crashes killed 32,719 Americans and injured more than 2.3 million people. Motor vehicle crashes remain one of the leading causes of death in the U.S.
- In addition to the toll on victims’ family and friends, a 2012 analysis found that crash deaths resulted in \$51 billion in medical and work loss costs.
- Automobile defects generate hundreds of investigations each year, but delay in disclosing defects and initiating recalls have cost lives.
- Pedestrian and bicycle deaths have risen in recent years and accounted for 17 percent of the total fatalities on U.S. roadways in 2013.
- While public transit remains one of the safest modes of travel in the U.S, high-profile rail transit fatalities over the last several years, including in Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Boston, indicate a need to focus on transit safety.

The **GROW AMERICA Act** will expand authority to protect the public from automobile defects. The **GROW AMERICA Act** will strengthen safety regulators’ ability to get unsafe cars off the road and hold automobile manufacturers accountable for defects that can cost lives. Specifically, the **Act**:

“Once every 15 minutes, a person is killed in a motor vehicle crash. In 2012 more than 33,000 people died and over two million more were injured on our roads. Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for youth and young adults between the ages of five and 24. We can and must do more.”

-Georges Benjamin, American Public Health Association

- Almost triples the budget of the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) to enhance our ability to monitor data, find defects sooner, and strengthen the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s ability to conduct investigations of vehicles with suspected defects;
- Establishes harsher penalties for manufacturers that refuse to address defective and dangerous vehicles and equipment that endanger the public;
- Provides the authority to require manufacturers to immediately cease retail sale and/or require repair of vehicles or equipment that pose an imminent hazard to the safety of the motoring public;
- Provides the authority to require rental car companies and used car dealers to participate in recalls of defective and unsafe vehicles; and

- Improves vehicle and tire recall efforts by taking steps to ensure the public is informed of recalls at franchise dealerships, independent tire stores and state departments of motor vehicles. The **Act** also provides consumers more time to get tire defects addressed for free.

The GROW AMERICA Act will improve safety on our nation’s roads, rails, and transit systems: The **Act** provides more than \$10 billion over six years for the Department’s highway safety modes to improve safety for all system users, and additional funding through the Federal Highway Administration to make capital improvements to advance safety.

The **GROW AMERICA Act**:

- Sets funding for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) at \$16 billion over 6 years. This program helps engineers identify hazards and prevent the next crash, and this level of HSIP funding will make lasting safety improvements over the next decade, saving lives of drivers and other road users for years to come;
- Allows the Department to be more engaged in motorcycle helmet policy discussions in the States;
- Provides \$7.4 billion to improve safety on local rural roads with too many deadly crashes;
- Encourages greater State progress on drunk and distracted driving and other key safety laws by giving States additional funding and flexibility in meeting grant requirements;
- Promotes graduated licensing requirements to help new teen drivers adjust to being on the road;
- Authorizes the Department to close unsafe bridges when State or tribal officials fail to do so;
- Strengthens the Department’s safety authority by increasing civil and criminal penalties and establishing emergency authority to restrict or prohibit an unsafe condition or practice on transit systems;
- Provides \$3 billion to assist with the implementation of Positive Train Control on commuter rail to prevent collisions. The **Act** also strengthen its authority to regulate hours of service to prevent fatigue among rail employees; and
- Includes “Fix-it-First” policies and reforms to prioritize investments for much needed repairs and to improve the safety of highways and bridges, subways and bus services, with particular attention to improving roads and bridges in rural and tribal areas.

The GROW AMERICA Act will improve truck and bus safety. Truck- and bus-related crashes are on the rise, killing 4,251 people in 2013. The **GROW AMERICA Act** will take steps to improve truck and bus safety by:

- Streamlining the federal truck- and bus-safety grant programs to provide more flexibility for States to take fast action to address regional and evolving truck- and bus-safety issues; and
- Improving safety through stricter standards for vehicle operators and more rigorous inspections.

The GROW AMERICA Act will improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public-transit users.

Walking and bicycling are essential components of the transportation network, especially to reach public

transportation connections. The **GROW AMERICA Act** will help make walking and bicycling a safer part of the trip by:

- Requiring states to consider the needs and safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and transit users when planning transportation projects;
- Broadening federal support and funding for many non-motorized transportation projects by increasing the eligibility and local control of the Transportation Alternatives Program; and
- Targeting state transportation dollars on investments that improve safety on roads with high numbers of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities.