

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS

June 13, 2019

Harald Krüger
BMW AG
Petuelring 124-130
80809 München
Germany

Dieter Zetsche
Daimler AG
70546 Stuttgart
Germany

James Hackett
Ford Motor Company
The Ford World HQ
One American Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Michael Manley
Fiat Chrysler Automobiles
25 St James's Street
London SW1A 1HA

Mary T. Barra
General Motors Company
300 Renaissance Dr W
Detroit, MI 48265

Takahiro Hachigo
Honda Motor Company
2-1-1 Minami-Aoyama
Minato-ku
Tokyo 107-8556
Japan

Chung Mong-koo
Hyundai Motor Company
12 Heolleung-ro
Yangjae-dong
Seocho-gu

Hiroto Saikawa
Nissan Motor Company
1 Chrome-1-1 Takashima
Nishi Ward
Yokohama
Kanagawa 220-8686
Japan

Tomomi Nakamura
Subaru Corporation
1-20-8 Ebisu
Shibuya-ku
Tokyo 150-8554
Japan

Elon Musk
Tesla, Inc.
3500 Deer Creek Road
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Akio Toyoda
Toyota Motor Corporation
1 Toyota-Cho
Aichi Prefecture 471-8571
Japan

Herbert Diess
Volkswagen Group
Berliner Ring 2
38440 Wolfsburg
Germany

Martin Lundstedt
Volvo
SE-405 08 Gothenburg
Sweden

Dear Executives:

I write to express concern over potential data privacy issues from automobiles that collect and use consumer data. Cars are becoming smarter, but the data that drives these technologies and question of data ownership do not appear to have been fully considered.

Years of research and development has facilitated breakthroughs in automotive technology to make our cars safer, more fuel-efficient, and easier to use. These advances benefit consumers by mitigating their carbon footprint, reducing the risk of collision and injury, and enhancing the overall driver experience. Yet while data plays an integral role in advancing new technology to

maximize consumer benefits and bolster the automotive industry, it is necessary to understand the scope, purpose, and extent to which our cars collect data.

A recent New York Times article, entitled “Your Car Knows When You Gain Weight,” enumerates types of data that may be collected, including consumer location, driving habits and, as the title alludes, biometrics.¹ Once connected with a smartphone, a car could then have access to an individual’s calls or texts. While use of this data can inform the driver of their car’s performance or enhance navigation technology, concerns for consumer privacy as well as data security should always be taken into account.

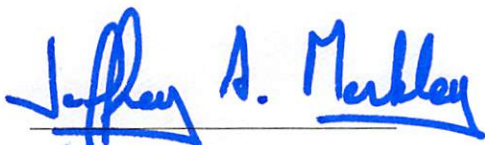
Given that a modern car is reportedly capable of collecting this consumer data at a rate of 25 gigabytes per hour, the question of who owns this data is equally pressing.² It is understandable that this data is used to improve performance and safety, though it may be unclear to many consumers what level of ownership they have over the data collected by the car they own or are leasing.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the following questions be answered:

1. Does your company currently install data collection technology in automobiles?
2. If your company’s cars collect data, what purpose does this technology serve, in what circumstances may they be activated, and at what rate is this data collected?
3. Please provide a comprehensive list of all types of data collected about the automobile as well as its drivers/passengers.
4. Do consumers have the opportunity to opt-out of having their data collected?
5. Who ultimately owns the data collected by your cars?
6. Please specify what security measures you have in place to protect consumer privacy and prevent data breaches of any collected information.

I look forward to learning more about these practices and request a response within 30 days.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

¹ Hanvey, Bill, “Your Car Knows When You Gain Weight,” May 20, 2019. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/20/opinion/car-repair-data-privacy.html>

² McKinsey & Company. “What’s driving the connected car,” September 2014.