

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 21, 2016

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW, Room 7100
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller Dodaro:

We write to you as members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. Senator Fischer serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security, and Senator Blumenthal serves as the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security. In these capacities, we have the opportunity to examine ways technology can be used to streamline government processes and reduce consumer burdens in the transportation sector.

Over the last twenty years, the U.S. government has promoted various uses of technology to improve the internal management and efficiency of government operations. A key part of that effort has been the transition from paper documents to electronic record-keeping systems. Various statutes and regulations have supported this transition in an effort to eliminate waste and inefficiency. For instance, the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, the Government Performance and Results Act, the GPRA Modernization Act, and the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996 have all helped save money and improve public access to government records.

Recently, federal transportation agencies, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, have begun using data from electronic record-keeping systems to improve internal operations. Their adoption of these technologies has also resulted in better understanding of trends in transportation safety. State agencies often have an important role in collecting these data, but some states have faced challenges in making the transition to digital systems. To help address these challenges, we respectfully request that you respond to the following questions:

- How, if at all, are selected federal transportation agencies transitioning to electronic record-keeping systems?
- How are electronic record-keeping systems being used to address safety, the streamlining of administrative and regulatory requirements, and other issues?

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- How are selected federal transportation agencies working with state agencies to transition to electronic record keeping? For example, to what degree are states positioned to adopt electronic automobile titling or electronic registration systems?
- What statutory, regulatory, or other challenges exist for states to transition to electronic records systems, such as electronic automobile titling or electronic automobile registration?
- What statutory, regulatory, or other challenges exist for states to share electronic record-keeping best practices and the collected data with other state transportation agencies?
- How, if at all, will federal agencies assist states in ensuring that the electronic systems they develop to process, store and share these data meet security and privacy standards and incorporate best practices?

Thank you for your timely attention to this request. We look forward to working with you to learn more about ways that technology can benefit consumers by increasing efficiencies in transportation.

Sincerely,



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator