

Why Congress Shouldn't Mandate AM Radios in New Cars

Mandating analog AM radios in every vehicle stretches the traditional approach to vehicle safety, affects innovation and undermines the transition to safer and cleaner transportation.

A mandate is contrary to the principles of a free-market economy:

- The automotive industry is fiercely competitive, constantly striving to meet consumer demands. Manufacturers have made significant investments in advanced infotainment systems, featuring Bluetooth, voice recognition, satellite radio, and smartphone integration.

Automakers are highly responsive to the desires of their customers. If consumers want AM radio as a standard feature, automakers will respond to customer demand and provide it.

A mandate does not enhance public safety:

- The Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's national alerting system that connects all public alert systems in the United States into a single system.
- IPAWS includes **maximum redundancies over multiple mediums**, including digital and analog AM and FM radio, internet-based radio, satellite radio and over cellular networks so that **Americans can receive alerts through their preferred means of communication.**
- AM radio is but one layer of IPAWS and is unlikely to be relied upon in most emergencies. For analog AM radio to be the sole source for emergency information, the driver would have to have no cell

phone, be out of cell range, have no FM/AM digital or satellite radio signal, the radio must be turned on, and to get any local information, the AM radio station transmitting would have to be geographically nearby and manned by a human.

"The public is moving away from radio and broadcast/cable television as the primary channels for news and information. Just as IPAWS has adapted emergency alerting to smart phones via WEAs, the program must now find ways to communicate with the public however they receive information."

– FEMA IPAWS Strategic Plan FY 22-26

A mandate hobbles electric vehicle (EV) rollout:

- **A mandate would slow the transition from fossil fuels and increase prices to produce EVs, which could be passed on to consumers.** Analog AM radio is highly susceptible to interference from electric motors. To counteract interference, manufacturers must install shielding cables and filters which require additional components and cost to automakers. A mandate would require some EV manufacturers to completely redesign some vehicle models and relaunch research and development.

The bottom line:

An AM radio mandate in vehicles risks stymieing efforts to modernize the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System for decades to come. Instead of imposing additional regulatory burdens on the automotive industry, CTA urges Congress to encourage and promote the adoption of emerging technologies that enhance vehicle safety and improve emergency communication systems.