

Preserving AM Radio in Cars: A Unified Call for Public Safety



Introduction

In a rapidly evolving technological landscape, the critical role of AM radio in ensuring public safety shines through. As the backbone of the Emergency Alert System and a reliable source of information for millions, AM radio serves as a lifeline during emergencies, offering crucial updates when other communication networks fail. The proposed [AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act](#) has garnered widespread support, uniting a diverse array of organizations under a shared goal: **preserving AM radio in cars**. This unified call underscores the recognition of AM radio's indispensable contribution to public safety and community resilience.



Notable Quotes of Support



[“American Farm Bureau Federation](#) has joined a national coalition in support of the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act—amplifying the voices of millions of rural Americans who rely on access to AM radio and its “unparalleled” services. In a [Dec. 18, 2023, letter](#) to Congress, AFBF and 24 other agriculture groups expressed support for the passage of [H.R. 3413/S. 1669](#)—a bipartisan bill introduced by Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass.”

– *American Farm Bureau Federation*

“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.”

– *National Association of Farm Broadcasting*

The Rural & Agriculture Council of America along with nine rural and agricultural groups highlighted the importance of AM radio for farmers and ranchers in a letter they sent to Congress supporting the AM Radio For Every Vehicle Act. In the letter, they state that **“AM radio is an essential communications medium in rural America. Local news, weather, and sports reporters are recognized as respected sources for information that affects the lives of millions of rural residents.** Commodity market reports are called into local radio stations every day across the country and well-known agriculture broadcasters remain a trusted source for valuable market reporting and updates. There are more than 4,470 licensed AM stations across the country, with over a third of those stations broadcasting this type of agricultural programming. More than 40 percent of radio listeners are tuning in from their cars or trucks.”

– Rural & Agriculture Council of America

“Nowhere is the loss of AM radio more acutely felt than in rural and remote areas, particularly among Tribal communities. Tribal communities often lose access to broadband, cellular, or electric service during severe weather, making reliance on AM radio essential for information. In crises, when every second counts, the absence of AM radio from vehicles further isolates Tribal communities and hampers emergency response efforts.”

– Native Public Media



“The removal of AM radio would be a detriment to trusted, community-led education. In the media marketplace, [the Latino Media Network] is a rarity. Not only do we program music and entertainment to build strong social connections and foster social cohesion, we know and understand the socio-economic gaps that many listeners face. Our radio stations provide services that range from Sunday morning interviews with a director of early education in Las Vegas, to top of the hour child-rearing tips in Fresno.”

– Latino Media Network

“AM radio is a conduit for diversity and a gateway for equal representation, while also remaining a vital lifeline to listeners in times of crisis. As car manufacturers threaten to remove AM radio from new vehicles, NHMC stands firm in its commitment to safeguarding this vital medium. The fight for AM radio is directly connected to the eighty million+ Americans who regularly rely on it. This is as much about public safety as it is about diversity and the right of all Americans to remain connected to a world that too often leaves them behind.”

– National Hispanic Media Coalition

“[The Hispanic Leadership Fund] believes that there would several harmful effects that would result from severely limiting Americans’ access to AM Radio. Foremost among our concerns is protecting the effectiveness of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Emergency Alert System (EAS). In addition to impacting the ability of the President to reach the American people in the event of a national emergency, the EAS also provides a mechanism for state and local authorities to deliver information about extreme weather and natural disasters, AMBER alerts, and similar events.”

– Hispanic Leadership Fund



"[Removing AM radio from cars and trucks] represents a huge setback for AM radio stations serving the needs of the African American community, as **AM radio is a crucial medium for delivering content that is culturally relevant and often missing from other formats.** More broadly, the removal of AM radio from electric vehicles would be a step backward in broadcasters' efforts to promote diversity and inclusivity in media. It would reinforce the dominance of mainstream media outlets and limit the diversity of voices and perspectives that are heard."

– National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters

"For generations, AM radio has been a quintessential part of American culture, bringing the sounds of Jazz, Blues, Gospel, R&B, and Hip Hop to homes and communities. Moreover, in addition to being a valuable emergency response and preparedness tool, **AM radio has offered a platform for the Black community to showcase their creativity, take ownership of their work and broadcasting channels, and pursue career pipelines in media.** There are currently 103 Black-owned radio stations in the US that provide community engagement opportunities and bolster small businesses through advertising and supply chain support. The National Urban League supports the AM Radio For Every Vehicle Act, which requires vehicles manufactured in or imported into the U.S. to have devices installed that provide access to AM Radio service, to ensure access to this crucial resource."

– National Urban League

“Because of the great distances that its signal carries, and due to its resiliency during even the worst natural disasters, the success of the National Public Warning System hinges on the use of AM radio. However, **should EV makers continue removing AM radios from their vehicles, this vital public safety system will no longer function as intended.**”

– Seven former leaders of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

“AM radio is an essential tool to emergency managers in effectively disseminating local, timely and crucial information to the public. **When extreme weather events occur and broadband, electric power and cell service are out, people with AM radios can continue to receive critical, and possibly lifesaving, information.** Unlike other services, AM broadcasts are unique in terms of their resiliency and reach, including to areas that may not be served fully, if at all, by cell and/or broadband service.”

– National Emergency Management Association



“Christian radio serves as a beacon for tens of millions of listeners across America each week, who tune in to faith-driven talk and teaching to be encouraged and to grow in their faith. Christian radio has a uniquely local interest, often leasing airtime to churches and ministries in the community to reach a wider audience with their sermons and programs. **Millions of listeners have been shaped and disciplined by faithful Christian radio ministries that speak to the concerns of the local listener**, meeting them exactly where they are. That work is put in jeopardy by automakers’ decisions to drop AM radio from their vehicles.”

– *National Religious Broadcasters*

“Older adults are also overrepresented in rural areas where wireless and broadband connections are limited or nonexistent. **AM radio connects millions of these older rural residents to their communities through targeted programming, including the latest local news and weather. Importantly, AM radio broadcasts are free and can be easily accessed during emergencies, whether at home or on the road.** The AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act would ensure that AM radios remain in vehicles by requiring the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to issue a rule that requires automakers to maintain AM broadcast radio in their vehicles without an additional fee. It would also require disclosure of the absence of AM radio access for vehicles sold before the rule takes effect.”

– *AARP*

“It is also important to note that AM radio is not a dead medium. While AM radio may be less popular than a decade ago, **80 million Americans still listen to AM radio each month and they don’t deserve to lose access to one of their few remaining sources of free information.** Indeed, while new services such as satellite radio and Bluetooth-enabled apps increasingly allow Americans to stream content anytime and anywhere, they are often not free. Customers often must pay for monthly subscriptions, something that is not always possible for low-income Americans.”

– *The American Consumer Institute*



The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council along with ALLvanza, National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters, National Urban League and OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates, sent a letter to Congress urging them to pass the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act. In the letter, the groups highlight AM radio “...as an entry point for minority station ownership [and] it also highlights the importance of minority station owners curating content that is hyper local and unique to the local communities served by AM radio stations.” The letter then highlights the impact AM radio has on serving underrepresented groups by “...play[ing] a vital role in providing communities of color and underrepresented groups with religious and in-language programming. For many immigrants, being able to hear religious services or programs in their native language enables them to maintain cultural connections and foster a sense of community.” Furthermore, **AM radio provides a critical source of local news and information for communities that may be overlooked by larger media outlets.** Many AM radio stations are locally owned and operated, so they have an interest in covering stories that are important to their communities. AM broadcasters ensure that their listeners have access to important information that directly impacts their lives.

"I'm certainly ready to run with that the moment Congress gets it [AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act] done, and I think it's got some good bipartisan support. And the basic idea here is that **AM radio is important. It's important not just for entertainment but for information and for safety.** We recognize that, I think most drivers recognize that and so I am glad to see there is a lot of interest in different parts of the country and from some people who don't always agree on everything, that this could be a good move."

– U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg

"There is a clear public safety imperative here. Having AM radio available in our cars means we always have access to emergency alerts and key warnings while we are out on the road. Updating transportation should not mean sacrificing access to what can be life-saving information. We stand ready to provide any necessary support and expertise to the Department of Transportation and Government Accountability Office as they may need."

– Jessica Rosenworcel, Chairwoman of the Federal Communications Commission





“NATE encourages the House of Representatives to pass this important bipartisan legislation that would require automakers to maintain **AM broadcast radio in new vehicles at no additional charge**. At a time when communication is critical, efforts to remove AM Radio from vehicles will threaten the safety of our workforce. Members of NATE are deployed across the country in many hard-to-reach areas where **AM Radio is vital for communication in the case of weather or other emergencies**. The value of AM radio during emergencies cannot be overstated, and it has clearly saved lives and kept our teams informed,” said President and CEO Todd Schlekeway. “We look forward to participating in these important conversations with members of the House as they consider this path forward.”

– NATE, The Communications Infrastructure Contractors Association

Preserving AM Radio in Cars Keeps Americans Safe

BY CURTIS LEGEYT, PRESIDENT AND CEO, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS • UPDATED ON MARCH 8, 2023



“NAB and radio leaders from across the country have been meeting with our counterparts in the auto industry. We want to work collaboratively to ensure cars keep listeners’ favorite local AM radio stations at their fingertips.”

– **Curtis LeGeyt, President and Chief Executive Officer, NAB**

<https://www.blog.nab.org/2023/03/08/preserving-am-radio-in-cars-keeps-americans-safe/>

Notable Opinion Pieces

EXCLUSIVE AUTOS INDUSTRY

Electric Vehicles Need AM Radio, Former Emergency Officials Argue

Ex-FEMA heads say band is important in emergencies, but auto makers note signal interference

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/electric-vehicles-need-am-radio-former-emergency-officials-argue-9e69e297>

We won't let these cars kill the AM radio star

Removing AM radio from cars would jeopardize emergency signals and harm 80 million listeners



OPINION By Sen. Ted Cruz, Sen. Ed Markey · Fox News

<https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/wont-these-cars-kill-am-radio-star>

Third Party Group Supporters

James Lee Witt, FEMA Director 1993-2001
Joe M. Allbaugh, FEMA Director 2001-2003
Michael Brown, FEMA Administrator 2003-2005
David Paulison, FEMA Administrator 2006-2009
Craig Fugate, FEMA Administrator 2009-2017
Brock Long, FEMA Administrator 2017-2019
Pete Gaynor, FEMA Administrator 2019-2021
AARP
ACLJ Action
Agricultural Retailers Association
ALLvanza
American Dairy Coalition
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
Americans for Limited Government
American Principles Project
American Seed Trade Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugarbeet Growers Association
Big City Emergency Managers
Bull Moose Project
Citizen Outreach
Corn Refiners Association
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
CropLife America
Energy Workforce and Technology Council
Farm Credit Council
Florida Sugar Cane Growers
Frontiers of Freedom
Georgia Farm Bureau
Heritage Action for America
Hispanic Leadership Fund
Illinois Farm Bureau
Independent Beef Association of North Dakota
Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas
Institute for Liberty
International Association of Chiefs of Police
International Association of Emergency Managers
International Association of Fire Chiefs
International Fresh Produce Association
Latino Farmers & Ranchers International, Inc.
Latino Media Network
Livestock Marketing Association
Major County Sheriffs of America
Michigan Farm Bureau
Midway Broadcasting
Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council
NATE: The Communications Infrastructure Contractors Association
National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters
National Association of Counties
National Association of Farm Broadcasting
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Constitutional Law Union
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Emergency Management Association
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
National Farmers Union
National Grange
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Milk Producers Federation
National Ocean Industries Association
National Sheriffs' Association
National Sorghum Producers
National Urban League
Native Public Media
Navajo Nation
Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation
New York Young Republicans Club
North Dakota Farmers Union
National Religious Broadcasters
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates
Ohio Agribusiness Association
Ohio Cattlemen's Association
Ohio Corn and Wheat Growers Association
Ohio Dairy Producers Association
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Ohio Pork Council
Ohio Poultry Association
Ohio Sheep Improvement Association
Ohio Soybean Association
Organic Trade Association
Rural & Agriculture Council of America
SAG-AFTRA
Salem Media Group
Seven Former FEMA Administrators
Tea Party Nation
Texas Sugar Cane Growers
The American Conservative
The American Consumer Institute
The Fertilizer Institute
U.S. Beet Sugar Association
U.S. Black Chambers
U.S. Cattlemen's Association
U.S. Oil and Gas Association
USA Rice
Western Energy Alliance
Women Involved in Farm Economics
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation