

# Keep AM Radio in Cars To Ensure Public Safety

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## The issue:

America's **public safety infrastructure is at risk** if automakers remove AM radio from vehicles.

- Policymakers should **enact the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act** (S. 315, H.R. 979) to keep this vital service in their vehicles to ensure Americans can be alerted to impending danger.

## Go deeper:

**AM radio serves a vital role in our nation's emergency infrastructure** as the backbone of the Emergency Alert System. When the power goes out and cell networks are down, the car radio is often the only way for people to get information, sometimes for days at a time.

- With **tens of millions of weekly listeners**<sup>1</sup>, AM radio is also an extremely popular way for Americans to stay connected to both national and local news, sports and entertainment.
- AM radio is **highly important to agricultural communities**, providing weather updates, crop reports and other information to farmers and ranchers.
- AM stations also **serve communities of color and underrepresented groups** with in-language, religious and other community-oriented niche programming.

Despite this, certain automakers have removed AM radio as a feature on electric vehicles and signaled that they may remove AM radio from new models of internal combustion engine vehicles in the future.<sup>2</sup>

- Rightly, there has been a public outcry from members of Congress, Federal Communications Commission officials and former Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administrators about removing AM radio from vehicles.

***"Experts at [FEMA]...have been clear: eliminating the AM radio will put public safety at risk."***<sup>3</sup>

Broadcasters have been working with automakers to address concerns they may have, including utilizing a simple software upgrade that reduces noise and interference. We want to ensure Americans can continue to enjoy the local news, entertainment, public safety benefits and connection AM radio has to offer without sacrificing vehicle performance.

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On January 29, 2025, Sens. Ted Cruz (TX) and Ed Markey (MA), along with 41 cosponsors, introduced S. 315, the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act. On February 5, 2025, the Senate Commerce Committee swiftly advanced S. 315 via voice vote.

Also on February 5, 2025, Reps. Gus Bilirakis (FL-12) and Frank Pallone (NJ-6) introduced a companion bill, H.R. 979, in the House of Representatives. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would require the Transportation Secretary to issue a rule requiring vehicles manufactured in or imported into the U.S. to have devices installed that provide access to AM radio. It would also, among other things, ensure that AM is easily accessible to the driver and require motor vehicles that do not include AM radio (in the period between enactment and prior to the Transportation Secretary issuing the new rule) to be labeled as such to consumers in a clear and conspicuous manner.

The 41 cosponsors in the Senate include Sens. Tammy Baldwin (WI), Jim Banks (IN), John Barrasso (WY), Marsha Blackburn (TN), Richard Blumenthal (CO), Katie Britt (AL), Ted Budd (NC), Maria Cantwell (WA), Shelley Moore Capito (WV), Tom Cotton (AR), Kevin Cramer (ND), Steve Daines (MT), Joni Ernst (IA), Deb Fischer (NE), Chuck Grassley (IA), Josh Hawley (MO), Maggie Hassan (NH), Mazie Hirono (HI), John Hoeven (ND), Jim Justice (WV), Angus King (ME), Amy Klobuchar (MN), James Lankford (OK), Ben Ray Lujan (NM), Cynthia Lummis (WY), Roger Marshall (KS), Jeff Merkley (OR), Jerry Moran (KS), Chris Murphy (CT), Jack Reed (RI), Pete Ricketts (NE), Bernie Sanders (VT), Rick Scott (FL), Jeanne Shaheen (NH), Tim Sheehy (MT), Tina Smith (MN), Dan Sullivan (AK), Ron Wyden (OR) and Todd Young (IN).

More than 125 organizations, including the National Emergency Management Association, American Farm Bureau Federation, AARP, Native Public Media, SAG-AFTRA and the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters, have also endorsed the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act. Their support underscores AM radio's indispensable role in public safety and its importance to communities nationwide.

## The bottom line:

Congress should **enact the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act** to **keep AM radio as a standard feature** in all vehicles. It is vital to public safety and to the tens of millions of Americans who depend on AM radio.

<sup>1</sup> Nielsen; Westwood One, <https://bit.ly/41LAP83>

<sup>2</sup> Detroit Free Press, <https://www.freep.com/story/money/cars/2023/04/01/ford-am-radio-commercial/70062845007/>

<sup>3</sup> Pete Gaynor, former administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in a [recent op-ed](#).