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Senator Markey Criticizes Eight Automakers for Removing Broadcast AM Radio from Vehicles

In December, Senator Markey sent letter urging automakers to maintain access to free broadcast AM radio, including in electric vehicles, for sake of public safety

[Responses from automakers \(PDF\)](#)

Washington (March 8, 2023) – Senator Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) today released responses from top automakers to his [December letter](#) asking the companies whether they have discontinued access to free broadcast AM radio in their vehicles, including electric vehicles. Of the 20 companies, eight — BMW, Ford, Mazda, Polestar, Rivian, Tesla, Volkswagen, and Volvo — have removed broadcast AM radio from their electric vehicles. By removing broadcast AM radio from their vehicles, Senator Markey said that the nine automakers have undermined the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) system for delivering critical public safety information to the public. Ten automakers — Honda, Hyundai, Jaguar/Land Rover, Kia, Lucid, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Stellantis, Subaru, and Toyota — still maintain access to broadcast AM radio in their vehicles. Two additional automakers, Mercedes-Benz and General Motors, refused to provide individual responses and instead relied on a response from the industry trade group, the Alliance for Automotive Innovation.

“Broadcast AM radio is an essential part of our emergency alert infrastructure, but the responses to my letter show that far too many automakers are ignoring the critical safety benefits of AM radio,” said Senator Markey. **“Although many automakers suggested that other communication tools — such as internet radio — could replace broadcast AM radio, in an emergency, drivers might not have access to the internet and could miss critical safety information. The truth is that broadcast AM radio is irreplaceable. As the auto industry rightfully replaces the internal combustion engine with electric batteries, I will continue to work to ensure that automakers maintain access to broadcast AM radio in all their vehicles.”**

As Senator Markey explained in his December letter, free broadcast AM radio is a critical channel for federal, state, and local officials to communicate with the public during natural disasters and other emergencies. Unlike FM radio, AM radio operates at lower frequencies and longer wavelengths, enabling it to pass through solid objects and travel further than other radio waves. As a result, FEMA’s National Public Warning System — through which FEMA delivers critical safety alerts to the public — operates through broadcast AM radio stations. As seven former FEMA administrators [explained in a letter](#) to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg last week, “should EV makers continue removing AM radios from their vehicles, this vital public safety system will no longer function as intended.” Although the

drivetrain in electric vehicles may interfere with broadcast AM radio signals, Senator Markey has urged automakers to invest in new technologies to mitigate this interference so that it can continue providing free, accessible broadcast AM radio in their vehicles.

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