

Testimony of Seval Oz
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U.S. Department of Transportation
Before the
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
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Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the privilege to appear before you today. I am deeply honored, and to be candid, profoundly aware of the magnitude and urgency of the task ahead. The challenges are formidable, but the chance to shape the future of transportation and American innovation is even more compelling.

I would like to acknowledge President Trump's unwavering commitment to ensuring that the U.S. Department of Transportation showcases the very best of American innovation and technology leadership.

I wish to thank Secretary Sean Duffy for his confidence in my leadership and entrusting me with the responsibility of delivering the safest, most efficient, and forward-looking transportation systems.

I am grateful to my family and friends for their love and support throughout my journey. My daughter—a proud Johns Hopkins undergraduate—is currently performing opera overseas. While she couldn't be here today, I'm blessed to be joined by dear friends.

I begin with a simple but bold premise: I believe in the mission of saving lives.

Every year, nearly 40,000 people lose their lives in traffic collisions—that's approximately 100 lives every single day. Yet, 90% of these deaths could be avoided with self-driving cars. We have the technology to save 10s of thousands of American lives — why aren't we doing so? For every year we wait, more lives are lost. It's not just a matter of innovation—it's a moral imperative.

I look forward to working with you on a national framework to advance our transportation technologies—many of which were Made-in-America and hold the promise to prevent countless fatalities.

The thought of restricting mobility is also deeply unsettling for me. Movement is as natural to me as breathing. When we lose our ability to move safely, our world shrinks. Our health, both mental and physical, suffers. We become isolated. We have all experienced the awkward moment of taking the car keys away from our aging parents, or lying awake at night, anxiously waiting for our teenagers to return home safely. The

promise of the new generation of transportation will be about building better drivers—ones who don't get distracted, never drive under the influence, possess superior perception, and react in an instant.

My role would be to set clear vision for how evidence-based research and innovation drive transportation policy and infrastructure towards practical, achievable solutions that advance public safety and serve the American people.

I was born to immigrant parents who deeply valued the opportunities this country offered. I learned early the importance of having a meaningful plan, fueled by determination, hard work, and commitment. These values became the cornerstone of my career, guiding me as I built high-performance teams in the dynamic, fast-paced world of global technology. That journey led me to leadership roles with Silicon Valley's most innovative companies.

I joined Google[X] because they shared my vision of merging advanced automotive hardware with intelligent software to solve real-world human challenges. My experience in global partnerships proved invaluable as I negotiated complex, multi-party agreements that brought together traditionally competitive, even adversarial stakeholders. By strategically leveraged urgency—and a well-placed “fear of missing out”—I aligned diverse interests and secured critical cooperation. In just 18 months, we accomplished what many thought impossible: delivering the first self-driving vehicle.

I earned the trust and support of key stakeholders across state and local governments, town halls, law enforcement, and emergency services. I'm most proud of leading this extraordinary collaboration resulting in an auto-pilot platform with an exceptional safety record. Building on that success, I transitioned to a global automotive supplier with over 200,000 employees, where I faced new challenges: driving digital transformation within a legacy industry.

Looking ahead, I have been advising top AI and data science teams to assess transformative technology frontiers. Together, we can establish U.S. transportation as the global gold standard by developing AI models built on the American automation stack. I am eager to mobilize my office's full resources to enhance safety, efficiency and innovation across all modes of our nation's advanced transportation network.

I have been in the lion's den of this \$4 trillion global automotive engine—projected to grow to \$7 trillion over the next decade. The Department of Transportation is our national pride for demonstrating U.S. leadership in driving the economic engine of our nation. This moment is not years away—it is now.

I shared parts of my journey with you to underscore that everything I've done—academically and professionally—has prepared me for this precise moment. We stand at the threshold of a generational opportunity that will define the future not only of transportation, but of American economic growth, innovation, and global influence.

Success will require competent and skilled leadership to earn the public's trust. I respectfully ask for the support of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation in achieving these vital goals.

I look forward to answering your important questions.