

## National Groups Seek to Curb Drunk Driving

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A broad range of safety, auto, insurance and alcohol industry groups and companies has called on Congress to pass legislation to provide funding for an advanced drunk driving detection research program that could lead to more than 8,000 fewer highway fatalities each year and a nationwide economic cost saving of approximately \$130 billion annually.

In a letter to House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-Fla.) and Ranking Democratic Member Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.), the groups called for inclusion of the ROADS SAFE (Research of Alcohol Detection Systems for Stopping Alcohol-related Fatalities Everywhere) legislation in the safety portion of the surface transportation measure under development by the Committee. The bill was introduced by Representatives Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Heath Shuler (D-N.C.) and John Sarbanes (D-Md.).

The Senate version of this legislation was introduced by Senators Tom Udall (D-N.M.) and Bob Corker (R-Tenn.). A version of their measure was approved last year by the Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee as part of broader legislation.

The letter (copy follows) states that the legislation "would authorize the transfer of currently unused safety funds at a rate of \$12 million annually for five years to support and expand the ongoing DADSS (Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety) research program currently being undertaken by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and leading automakers."

"The goal of this research program is to develop a publicly-supported technology for vehicles that will instantaneously and passively detect if a driver is drunk and I (safety systems) prevent the vehicle from starting.



U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, center, and Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano together cut the ribbon opening the Port of Detroit's new Public Dock and Terminal on the riverfront near the RenCen during mid-July.

## Port of Detroit Opens Passenger Dock, Terminal

by Gerald Scott  
News Dept.

Just in time for the city's 310th birthday celebration, Detroit now has a riverfront marine passenger terminal worthy of the city's name and image as a Great Lakes port.

Called the Port of Detroit / Public Dock & Terminal, the new facility is located on the riverfront immediately west of the GM RenCen headquarters facility.

Civic leaders, including Mayor Dave Bing, Wayne County Commissioner Robert Ficano and U.S. Rep. Hansen Clarke all gathered for the ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 18, when a 150-foot pleasure cruiser was docked there.

"Well, Detroit's very unique in the sense that we have two ports — we have the commercial passenger port here, designed for passenger traffic, ferry traffic, ships like that — and then we have the industrial port, which is down by the (Ambassador) bridge," Clarke said.

"Both of them, economically, are barometers for our future, where we're going.

"I have to say, the outlook is bright. We have a cruise ship with us, we have secured a commitment for 10 visits next year from another sister ship, plus we have other ships coming next year, including tall sailing ships, ferries, and more."

Indeed, we sometimes forget that the city of Detroit itself was established in 1701 as a commercial port, a fisherman's port and a trapping post for that era.

The auto industry, which emerged in the 20th century, has camouflaged the city's larger geographic role as an historically important Great Lakes port.

Indeed, people remember the Bob-lo boats and Boblo Island Amusement Park, but Detroit was much more robust in terms of pleasure cruising, particularly in the latter half of the 19th century. But the emergence of autos kind of buried that larger history.

"If you look down the river, we have industrial-sized ships bringing steel coils for our industry, for the auto industry," Clarke said. "So we are the barometer for the overall economy itself, that's what makes us important."

Very soon, according to Hansen, passenger ships unloading at the RenCen-area dock will disgorge visitors who will spend money up and down Woodward Avenue, shop inside the RenCen and perhaps even take in an after Detroit Tigers game at Comerica Park before returning to their docked vessel for the night.

"They are going to make this a home port, where international passengers will be processed — the Dept. of Homeland Security will eventually have an office in this building, so will the Coast Guard, they'll be active. And passengers will disembark and be in a secure zone inside the building," Clarke said.

"They (international travelers) will be processed

through customs, just like at the airport. For the domestic trade, passengers who are not international, are free to get off the ship and travel as they will.

"This ship, the very first thing they wanted to do was go visit the Renaissance Center and General Motors. They might dine in Greektown."

Clarke also envisions the day when U.S. Navy and Coast Guard and Canadian Navy ships, frigate sized, will dock at the Port of Detroit, too — perhaps during Freedom Week fireworks' celebrations.

He especially liked the idea that U.S. Navy and Canadian Navy sailors might spend their payday money traveling up and down the riverfront and in the GM RenCen.

## UAW Bargaining Position Is Curious After Loans

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for the UAW's new leader, Bob King, who preaches cooperation over confrontation.

King wants to "make sure our members get their fair share of the upside" but also keep the companies competitive.

Wall Street is watching, too. Stock prices at Ford and GM and a potential Chrysler public offering could be hurt if companies end up with higher costs.

The talks started last Monday at Chrysler's Auburn Hills, Mich., headquarters with a series of friendly handshakes. Both sides wore matching maroon jackets to signal unity.

Here are the key issues in the talks:

Workers want a bigger cut of the profits now that Detroit's automakers are making money again. They got profit-sharing checks in January, but they'll want bigger ones this year to offset the risk that they could get nothing if the economy slows more and auto sales tank. They also resent the size of executive pay packages, particularly at Ford, where workers fume that Ford CEO Alan Mulally got \$26.5 million for 2010.

Some assembly-line workers are already mad about giving up guaranteed raises. They could resist profit-sharing.

"Most workers say 'No, that's not good enough,'" says Gary Walkowicz, a Ford worker who ran unsuccessfully against King last year. "It's like pie in the sky as opposed to real increases in wages to help us keep up with increasing prices."

The UAW's ultimate weapon, a strike, is banned at GM and Chrysler under terms of the government bailout. The union could still strike at Ford.

Even with big reductions in labor costs since 2007, GM and Ford still pay more in wages and benefits than Toyota, Honda and Hyundai, which don't have unionized workers. Ford's cost is the highest in Detroit at around \$58 per hour, while Toyota's is \$55, according to the Center for Automotive Research. GM and Ford will try to cut costs further in talks this summer, while Chrysler,

## Ford Reduces Environmental Footprint with Non-Plastics Use

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in Ford automobiles are currently recyclable at end of life.

A lot of that is metal components, but there is 300 pounds of plastic on the vehicles, and that's Mielewski's focus; to make as much of that 300 pounds from recycled or recyclable materials.

This focus on developing and using recyclable materials has gained momentum in recent years.

"We are using more recycled plastics certainly than we did 20 years ago," said Mielewski. "As plastics materials become more expensive and more scarce, there is a big motivation, of course, to take something that is already end-of-life and reuse it."

There is also more motivation to create and use new materials.

Besides the wheat straw and soy-based materials that are already being used, Mielewski said Ford is also working on using cellulose from trees as reinforcing fiber for plastics.

"We are really excited about little by little replacing the traditional materials either with a sustainable feedback or reinforcing plastics with a natural material," said Mielewski.

Also new is that Ford has started to track its recycled materials.

"We have encouraged our suppliers to use recycled materials whenever they meet all the performance and durability specs for many years," said Mielewski.

"Except, we never tracked in any database what they are using and how much."

## Buick LaCrosse's eAssist Supports Powertrain

by Christine Snyder  
Staff Reporter

Technology that aids fuel economy is wonderful, but not if it tacks on more dollars to a vehicle price than it can save at the pump or detracts from its comfort.

At a ride-and-drive event in downtown Birmingham July 20, the Buick team demonstrated how the eAssist system, which will come standard on the 2012 Buick LaCrosse, enhances the LaCrosse.

The eAssist system is a start/stop system that shuts off the fuel when slowing down and recaptures energy when braking. It can access an additional 15 horsepower when needed for such tasks as grade climbing, at launch and for freeway ramp entry.

Coupled with aerodynamic shutter system and other efficiencies, the car is estimated to get 36 mpg hwy and 25 city.

Daryl Wilson, lead development engineer for eAssist, calls it "light" electrification. The system consists of a 4-cylinder engine, a small 64 lb. electric motor and lithium-ion battery.

"It's a hybrid, but it's a different integration of the system than you see on the market today," said Wilson. "(Electricity) assists the powertrain . . . it doesn't propel the vehicle. It doesn't produce a significant amount of electric drive to propel. That's the differentiator."

Steve Poulos, chief global engineer for eAssist, added, "It's not intended to go head to head with a full hybrid. We didn't want our customers to have to pay for that," referring to the added cost of full hybrid systems.

The eAssist system is included as standard on the LaCrosse this summer and will become available later on the Buick Regal and Chevrolet Malibu.

"The LaCrosse has been doing extremely well," said Roger McCormack, Buick's marketing director. "It's already one of the best fuel-efficient cars in its class and eAssist makes a great car even

better."

While the fuel economy is important, McCormack said it was even more important that the technology used didn't detract from LaCrosse.

"The engineers spent a lot of time incorporating the technology, so it not only doesn't distract from what makes a LaCrosse a LaCrosse, but enhances it," said McCormack. "It enhances the quiet and comfort part of the equation."

Detroit Auto Scene had a chance to experience the eAssist system and what this reporter found important to note is the system's undetectability.

When coming to a stop, the engine cuts out. The car is quiet to begin with and it turns back on instantaneously upon acceleration, so that you wouldn't notice it if not for the special gauge that indicates it is temporarily off when idled.

The car has to be turned off manually like any conventional vehicle to be fully shut off.

"It's a unique technology and its application is perfect for the LaCrosse," said McCormack.

## Big Three Agree on EPA Fuel Economy

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consumers would not buy smaller and more efficient cars, and the technology to reduce fuel dependency was too expensive.

The dynamics were also changed by the \$62 billion bailout of GM and Chrysler by taxpayers, making it harder for automakers to say no to the White House.

"This agreement on fuel standards represents the single most important step we have taken as a nation to reduce our dependence on foreign oil," Obama said, sharing the stage with top executives of the major auto makers before a backdrop of some of the most cutting-edge cars on the road.

"Just as cars will go further on a gallon of gas, our economy will go further on a barrel



PHOTO: CHRISTINE SNYDER

Daryl Wilson, left, eAssist lead development engineer, and Steve Poulos, eAssist global chief engineer, with a 2012 Buick LaCrosse with eAssist at a ride-and-drive event in downtown Birmingham.

of oil," Obama said.

When achieved, the 54.5 mile-per-gallon target will reduce U.S. oil consumption from vehicles by 40 percent and halve the amount of greenhouse gas pollution coming out of exhausts.

For American families, the president said the agreement — which will be subject to a mid-course review — means filling up the car every two weeks, instead of every week.

That would save \$8,000 in fuel costs over the life of a vehicle, he said.

The deal was less than what environmentalists and public health advocates wanted, but more than the Detroit Three automakers desired.

In a letter to the president last week, Michigan lawmakers called the higher proposal "overly aggressive," after automakers had said they'd

work to get vehicles averaging 42.6 to 46.7 miles per gallon. Green groups, meanwhile, had pushed for a 62 miles-per-gallon target by 2025.

For Obama, who watched his campaign promise on this issue die when Republicans retook control of the House, the compromise provides a way around political roadblocks and offers an opportunity to affect climate change.

The deal also provides an answer on the issue of oil dependency.

It promises reduced demand at a time when Republicans in Congress have criticized Obama for being too slow to drill and not opening up more areas to oil and gas exploration after the massive Gulf oil spill last year.

Each automaker issued a statement agreeing with EPA.