

STATEMENT OF MORGAN LAKE  
October 19, 2015

Hello. My name is Morgan Lake and I am from Laurel, Maryland.

On July 19, 2013, I was heading eastbound on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge when traffic slowed to a near stop. The next thing I knew, my car was hit from behind by a distracted truck driver. The impact sent my car and me up and over the bridge railing, where it teetered before plunging me 27 feet into the water below. Upon impact, my windows instantly shattered and my car rapidly filled with water. Somehow, I was able to unbuckle my seatbelt, free myself from the car and swim to a bridge support pillar. I was rescued from the rocks at the base of the bridge pillar and taken to Maryland Shock Trauma Center where I was treated for minor injuries. Later I learned the truck driver had been traveling about 50 miles an hour at impact.

I also later learned that there is technology available that could have made the difference in my crash. Technology called Forward Collision Avoidance and Mitigation, or F-CAM, uses radar and sensors to first alert the driver and then to apply the brakes when a crash is imminent. If implemented today, this technology could be preventing crashes, saving lives and reducing injuries. Every year that full implementation of F-CAM is delayed, it is estimated that 166 people needlessly die and another 8,000 individuals suffer serious injuries in large truck crashes. It is critical that this commonsense and practical step be taken to curtail the mounting emotional and economic toll that results from the 4,000 fatalities and 100,000 injuries that occur annually in large truck crashes.

The U.S. Department of Transportation should require life-saving, safety technologies be standard equipment on all trucks to help stem the tide of large truck crashes on our nation's highways. While we were pleased to hear that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration granted the Truck Safety Coalition's petition for rulemaking to require F-CAM systems on all large trucks, we need swift Congressional action to achieve this to goal as soon as possible – lives depend on it.

Safety technologies are a key tool in preventing and mitigating crashes that often occur as the result of driver factors such as distraction, inattention, and also fatigue. There are too many examples of truck drivers falling asleep and crashing into vehicles, causing often multiple deaths, severe injuries and unimaginable devastation. Yet, despite this, the trucking industry is still relentlessly pushing to increase the working and driving hours of truck drivers up to 82 hours a week and carving out special interest exemptions to hours of service rules. This only perpetuates the truck driver fatigue epidemic, risking more lives and putting more people in jeopardy. And this is not an isolated problem. Alarming, according to a 2006 survey, 65 percent of truck drivers reported that they often or sometimes felt drowsy while driving and nearly half of truck drivers admitted

that they had actually fallen asleep while driving in the previous year. It is unacceptable that Congress is not only ignoring this problem, but instead considering and driving forth measures that will make it worse. It is unacceptable that Congress has opened the door to work schedules that not only push truck drivers to their physical limits but that also put families directly in their path.

It only takes a second for driver distraction, inattention or fatigue to cause a crash and end a life. I am here today urging people to listen to my story, here the facts of my crash, and heed the solutions that are at hand. It can save a life.