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Connecticut Department of Transportation Launches Initiative to Advance Innovative Alcohol Detection Technology to End Drunk Driving

Connecticut is the third state to join the Driven to Protect Initiative, which empowers states to end drunk driving by advancing lifesaving alcohol detection safety technology

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) today launched **Driven to Protect | Connecticut**, becoming the third state to join the Driven to Protect Initiative, which seeks to end drunk driving by advancing the development of **Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety (DADSS)** technology. The announcement was made at Fairfield Ludlowe High School, where a student attending the school was killed by a drunk driver in 2020. The DADSS system is designed to reliably, accurately, and passively detect if a driver's blood alcohol concentration is at or above the legal limit and prevent the vehicle from moving.

Drunk driving remains the number one cause of fatalities on U.S. roadways, claiming more than 10,000 lives and costing the U.S. approximately \$194 billion every year. In Connecticut in 2021, the last year of verifiable data, preliminary data shows 112 people were killed in alcohol-impaired crashes, which accounted for 38% of all fatalities in the state.

As part of the Initiative, the **Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto**, will "drive the drive" as his vehicle has been fitted with the prototype DADSS technology. The CTDOT Highway Safety Office also has a vehicle with the DADSS technology. Additionally, four of the CTDOT pickup trucks will have this technology installed in the future. Having these six vehicles is helping to generate real-world operational data that will improve the alcohol sensors. The vehicles will also be at schools, community events, fairs, sporting events, and more around the state, giving Connecticut residents and students a first-hand look at how the sensors work.

"This new technology promises a breakthrough advance in saving lives from drunk driving. I have long advocated for this initiative because nearly 40% of all traffic fatalities on our roads involve an alcohol-impaired driver. Many of these tragedies can be prevented through innovative technology that collects accurate data on blood alcohol levels and can slow or immobilize a vehicle," **said Senator Richard Blumenthal**. "The Driven to Protect Initiative will strengthen testing technology and raise awareness about its potential to save lives. I am grateful to Commissioner Eucalitto for his commitment to this pilot program and will continue to push innovative ways to make our roads safer for all."

Powered by a public-private partnership between the **Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS)** and the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)**, the **Driven to Protect Initiative** offers states the opportunity to test the DADSS alcohol-detection technology on their roads, bringing it closer to widespread deployment and encouraging consumers to consider advanced sensor technology as a solution to this deadly problem. These state collaborations have helped advance the technology from an early prototype to one intended for widespread use in vehicles of the future.

“We are perennially in the top three nationally for drunk driving fatalities and need to reverse that trend. There is a drunk driving problem in Connecticut, and we are taking steps to make our roadways safer for everyone,” said **Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto**. “Alcohol detection systems have the potential to stop drunk drivers before they hurt or kill themselves or someone else. Piloting in-vehicle alcohol detection technology is one step we can take to make a big difference. I am proud to participate in this program to provide reliable data and feedback to DADSS. I hope this technology will be in all new cars one day, helping us to hopefully end drunk driving fatalities in our lifetime.”

Building consumer awareness, confidence, and trust in alcohol detection technology is essential to the Driven to Protect Initiative. Driven to Protect offers a range of educational materials to help state residents better understand the risks of driving after drinking, give them actionable information about avoiding these dangers, and encourage them to adopt alcohol detection technology in their vehicles when it’s ready.

“We’re excited to partner with the state of Connecticut to help advance alcohol detection technology for vehicles of the future,” said **President & CEO of the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety Robert Strassburger**. “Each mile the system is driven on Connecticut roads will help us refine and improve the DADSS technology for widespread commercialization nationwide. Through the Driven to Protect Initiative, we also look forward to educating Connecticut residents about the dangers of drunk driving and the potential for this technology to save lives and make their roads safer.”

For more information about **Driven to Protect | Connecticut**, visit DrivenToProtect.org.

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About the Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety Program (DADSS)

The DADSS Program brings together the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS), a nonprofit organization funded by the world’s leading automakers, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and states participating in the Driven to Protect Initiative in one of the most important government and private sector partnerships in recent years. Public-private partnerships like DADSS have led to innovations that enhance our everyday lives, such as the internet, GPS, and the microchip. The Program is developing a first-of-its-kind alcohol detection technology to measure and precisely quantify when a driver is intoxicated with a BAC at or above 0.08% - the legal limit in most states - and prevent the vehicle from moving. This breakthrough technology is designed to be fast, accurate, reliable, and affordable. And unlike existing alcohol detection technologies, it is not a punitive device – it is instead designed to be seamlessly installed into new vehicles and not affect normal driving behavior. The alcohol detection system is likely to produce safety benefits on par with back-up cameras and seat belts. For more information about the DADSS program, visit www.dadss.org.