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## Comment from Traffic Injury Research Foundation USA, Inc.

Posted by the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** on Jan 20, 2026

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Dear Administrator Morrison:

The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) is mission critical for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and organizations nationwide, to continue doing the research and assessments that inform the countermeasures that ultimately save lives. The Traffic Injury Research Foundation USA, Inc. (TIRF USA), asks that NHTSA continue to prioritize this incomparable resource and support the continuation of funding.

TIRF USA is an independent road safety research institute and registered 501(c)3. TIRF USA is a leader in research, program and policy development, evaluation, and knowledge transfer — preventing loss of life and injuries on the roads, reducing social costs, and safeguarding productivity. TIRF USA’s global projects underscore the value of tailoring research, policies, and programs to the local context and environment of road users. An extensive understanding of cultural and legal factors shaping decision-making and strategies to reduce road crashes is essential.

TIRF USA consistently utilizes FARS as the most accurate and complete database of roadway fatalities, using the data to identify trends, evaluate countermeasures, and inform policy. Some of the work we have done recently using FARS includes, the development of a Road Safety Monitor public opinion poll series since 2015, policy analysis for drug- and alcohol- impaired driving legislation, longitudinal studies on pedestrian fatalities and active transportation, comparative analysis for a Youth Distracted Driving Survey for the National Distracted Driving Coalition, and development of cognitive testing tools for older drivers using crash data. FARS provides an unmatched national census of traffic fatalities, which is essential in the study of traffic safety.

The greatest limitation of FARS in our line of work is the timeline for release of current data. It takes NHTSA two to three years from collection to release, for each year’s data. In comparison, state level police-reported crash files provide more timely insights on crashes and behaviors. Although these data sources can be

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used for a state-by-state analysis, no other sources provide the national, comprehensive picture that FARS offers. When proposing changes that could speed up the FARS data releases, by simplification of data elements or restructuring the relational databases, NHTSA should first seek public comment regarding the proposed changes. It is essential that the accuracy and comparative functionality of the database is maintained.


Having worked at NHTSA for several years in the Office of Behavioral Safety Research, I have a unique understanding of the importance and utility that FARS provides within the agency and to those supporting the critical mission of reducing road deaths. NHTSA utilizes FARS to set priorities, inform and assess the effectiveness of countermeasures, and guide policy for vehicle regulation.

As a road safety research institute with the vision of reducing deaths and injuries resulting from road crashes by designing, implementing, evaluating, and promoting evidence-based strategies, FARS provides an unparalleled data source, in both historical and contemporary terms, that is essential for our research. We ask that NHTSA continues to fund and support the collection and publication of FARS data, as it provides essential information that is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency and has unmatched practical utility in this field of research.

Sincerely,

Rachel Hamel, Ph.D.  
Director, Research  
Traffic Injury Research Foundation USA, Inc.

Attachments 1

 TIRF USA comment\_Docket No. NHTSA-2025-0721

[Download \(https://downloads.regulations.gov/NHTSA-2025-0721-0018/attachment\\_1.pdf\)](https://downloads.regulations.gov/NHTSA-2025-0721-0018/attachment_1.pdf)

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