

HCS HBs 2069 & 2208 -- AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

SPONSOR: Phelps

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Emerging Issues by a vote of 7 to 4.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 2069 & 2208.

This bill adds several provisions relating to autonomous vehicles.

This bill defines the terms "automated driving system", "dynamic driving task", "dynamic driving task fallback", "fully autonomous vehicle", and other terms relating to autonomous vehicles. This bill makes use of certain automotive standards as published in April 2021 by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE).

Under the bill, a person can operate a fully autonomous vehicle on public roads if certain conditions are met relating to the vehicle's certification and safety capabilities. Before doing so, a person must submit a law enforcement plan to the Department of Public Safety (DPS), as described in the bill.

The bill states that, when engaged, the automated driving system of a vehicle is considered the driver of that vehicle for the purpose of complying with traffic or motor vehicle laws, and the driving system is considered to be licensed to operate the vehicle. Before a person operates any autonomous vehicle on a public road without a human driver, they must submit proof of financial responsibility to the Department of Revenue. Fully autonomous vehicles must remain at the scene of a crash, as required of human drivers by current law, and crashes or collisions involving autonomous vehicles must be reported. The bill allows for the operation of an on-demand autonomous vehicle network under the same restrictions as taxis and other for-hire passenger transport systems. The bill requires that a fully autonomous vehicle be properly registered and titled in this State.

Under the bill, a person can operate an autonomous vehicle if the autonomous vehicle alerts the human driver to situations where they need to take control, and the vehicle is able to follow traffic regulations. Human drivers are not restricted from driving fully autonomous vehicles. Fully autonomous vehicles which are also commercial vehicles can operate pursuant to

commercial vehicle laws. This bill exempts certain fully autonomous vehicles that aren't designed to be operated by human drivers from motor vehicle equipment laws and regulations that are only relevant when vehicles are driven by humans.

Rulemaking authority to implement this bill is given to the director of DPS. No State agency, political subdivision, municipality, or local entity can prohibit, tax, or regulate autonomous vehicles or their use in a transportation service network.

This bill is similar to HB 1166 (2025).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that a regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles is long overdue. The use of autonomous vehicles increases public safety, results in far fewer accidents, and removes human error or misjudgment. Supporters further state that autonomous vehicles are better able to detect malfunctions in the car, road conditions, and can pull data about construction sites. With the continued use of such technology, more innovation will result.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Phelps; Hope Ledford, Chamber of Progress; Tesla Motors Inc.; Alliance for Automotive Innovation; Jacqueline Bardgett, City of St. Louis; Andrew Sartorius; Brian Grace, Waymo LLC; David Margines, Waymo LLC; Americans For Prosperity; Mo Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Jerod Breit, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD); Lara Dailey, Waymo LLC; Lori Becker, Starkloff Disability Inst.; and Greater St. Louis, Inc..

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that autonomous vehicles still need quite a bit of human assistance, maintenance, and oversight in order to ensure they are operated properly. Opponents further state that autonomous vehicles have proven to operate poorly during inclement weather, such as ice, sleet, and snow, which makes such a vehicle much more dangerous without the aid of a human driver.

Testifying in person against the bill were Cindy Knittig, Teamsters Local 610; Joe Widmer, Freedom of Road Rider's Inc;

Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys; Thomas Mullins, Teamsters Local 610; ABATE For Missouri; and Kevin Hertel.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say automobile insurance providers will have to base their calculations not on negligence law, but rather on product liability law, which will require proving a different set of elements.

Testifying in person on the bill were Missouri Insurance Coalition; Missouri Municipal League; Municipal League of Metro St. Louis.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.