

HCS HBs 2069 & 2208 -- AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES (Phelps)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Emerging Issues

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", "person", and other terms relating to autonomous vehicles. The 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 interaction plan to the Department of Public Safety (DPS), including the safe negotiation of railroad crossings, as described in the bill. A natural person who is not physically situated in the driver's seat of a fully autonomous vehicle and provides real-time operational and tactical function performance data related to the dynamic driving task fallback must be physically present in the United States and maintain a valid driver's license.

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. Any corporation or other business entity subject to the provisions of this bill will be subject to personal jurisdiction 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.

The owner of a fully autonomous vehicle will be responsible for any civil liability resulting from the acts or omissions of the automated driving system, as described in the bill.

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).