Americans Want Self-Driving Cars, & Congress Must Act to Advance Safe AVs

One of the most exciting things about self-driving cars is their ability to make our roads safer. As the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) likes to note, 94 percent of serious crashes are due to human error, and self-driving cars could eliminate those accidents.

Level 5 Autonomous Vehicles could save hundreds of thousands of lives over the long term. So why are Tesla’s cars — sold with “fully self-driving” capabilities — under investigation for causing crashes?

The straight answer is that consumers are driving the cars like Tesla’s marketing suggests, and the result is unsafe.

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**NHTSA Autonomy Levels**

**Level 0**
The driver does all the driving.

**Level 1**
The vehicle can sometimes assist the driver with either steering or braking/accelerating, but not both simultaneously.

**Level 2**
The vehicle can itself actually control both steering and braking/accelerating simultaneously under some circumstances. The driver must continue to pay full attention at all times and perform the rest of the driving task.

**Level 3**
The vehicle can itself perform all aspects of the driving task under some circumstances. In those circumstances, the driver must be ready to take back control at any time.

**Level 4**
The vehicle can perform all driving tasks and monitor the driving environment in certain circumstances. The driver does not pay attention in those circumstances.

**Level 5**
The vehicle can do all the driving in all circumstances. The occupants are just passengers & need never be involved in driving.

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Tesla Doesn't Operate Like Real Autonomous Vehicle Developers

There are companies out there that are serious about developing fully autonomous, self-driving cars, and have deliberately taken a different approach. There are a few important differentiators that distinguish them from Tesla.

### Transparency

Every major developer of autonomous vehicles has submitted Voluntary Safety-Self Assessments to NHTSA reporting on the safety of their automated driving systems. 

*Tesla has never completed the voluntary report.*

### Sensors & Cameras

Most companies developing full self-driving vehicles rely on a suite of sensors like cameras, lidar, radar, and ultrasonic sensors. 

*Tesla has been selling cars with driver assistance features based solely on eight cameras.*

### Development Methods

The biggest developers of AV technology have taken a methodical, predictive approach to development—testing millions of traffic scenarios with highly trained backup drivers, in geofenced areas, under specific weather conditions to ensure safety. 

*Tesla has taken an iterative approach to development—testing self-driving features on the public and making changes along the way.*

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The Federal Government Must Act To Encourage Level 5 Autonomous Vehicle Development

American consumers want safe self-driving cars, and policymakers should be doing everything possible to make sure these products are reliable. That means allowing responsible AV companies to begin putting safe vehicles on the road as they are finalized.

- Ease restrictions on number of AV cars without human driver components on the road
- Federal Regulators should finalize a long-awaited “occupant protection rule”, allowing companies that have developed safe, tested AV’s to put their cars on the road.