



Director of State and Local Government Relations, Central US
Chamber of Progress
Nebraska Legislature
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee
Re: Oppose NB L.B.625

February 14, 2023

Good afternoon Chair Suzanne Geist and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record regarding **L.B. 625**. On behalf of the Chamber of Progress, a tech industry coalition promoting technology's progressive future, I write to respectfully urge your committee to **oppose L.B.625**, which prohibits the operation of autonomous vehicles without a human driver being physically present.

Our corporate partners include companies like Cruise, Waymo, and Zoox, but our partners do not have a vote on or veto over our positions.

We strongly support autonomous vehicles because of its potential to save hundreds of thousands of lives and benefit our communities – promoting sustainability, mitigating transit and food accessibility gaps, and increasing mobility for the elderly and disabled.

AVs will bring safer streets and reduce the number of accidents. The National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) released crash data reporting nearly 43,000 lives were lost in traffic-related fatalities in 2021.¹ In 2022, the number of traffic-related deaths in Nebraska surpassed 250, a record number since 2007.²

¹ <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813298?source=email>

² https://omaha.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraskas-urban-areas-see-big-increase-in-deadly-crashes-as-traffic-fatalities-rose-in-22/article_313ba680-8b60-11ed-9254-53d65966ed3c.html#:~:text=The%20254%20deaths%20on%20Nebraska.232%20from%202017%20to%202021.

Research shows that at least 90% of car crashes are caused by human error,³ and studies suggest that putting AVs on the road now could save hundreds of thousands of lives over the long term.

AVs can positively impact the environment and promote sustainability efforts.

Through high-speed driving, braking, and re-acceleration, humans burn a lot of gas and energy while driving.⁴ According to the Southwest Research Institute, through connectivity and automation, vehicles can reach 20% improvement in fuel efficiency.⁵ Since autonomous vehicles are programmed to follow traffic rules and speed limits, autonomous vehicles will ultimately burn less gas and energy.

AVs will help mitigate food accessibility gaps.

Residents in low-food access areas are forced to travel far away to get to grocery stores. In some communities, AVs are delivering groceries and food⁶ via low-speed, seatless, passengerless autonomous vehicles. With this technology, residents that live outside food-rich areas have the same convenient and affordable access to fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, and meat they need to live happily and healthily.

We share your concerns and commitment to safety, but implementing these proposed regulations would unnecessarily prolong the future promise of autonomous vehicles for Nebraska. As it mandates human drivers, this bill does not reflect AV technology's rapid developments. In fact, a 2021 report estimates that autonomous vehicles will not only match but exceed human safety levels by 2024.⁷ This legislation would set back Nebraska's efforts to attract innovation.

With the tremendous potential of AVs to make Nebraska a safer and more equitable place, it is so important to test, improve, and deploy AVs without delay. For the sake of supporting those with disabilities, addressing food deserts, reducing traffic deaths, and increasing job opportunities, we encourage you to **oppose L.B.625.**

Thank you.

³ <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812115>

⁴ <https://greenerideal.com/news/vehicles/driverless-cars-environmental-benefits/>

⁵ <https://www.swri.org/press-release/vehicle-fuel-efficiency-improvement-connectivity-automation-arpa-e-nextcar>

⁶ <https://www.businessfleet.com/327304/nuro-avs-to-deliver-kroger-groceries-in-houston>

⁷ <https://www.idtechex.com/en/research-report/autonomous-cars-robotaxis-and-sensors-2022-2042/832>

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