



Testimony of Jamie Pascal
Director of Civic Innovation Policy
Chamber of Progress
Re: Support of SB 5594

February 7, 2023

Good afternoon Chairman Marko Lias and members of the Committee:

My name is Jamie Pascal and I serve as the Director of Civic Innovation Policy for the Chamber of Progress, a tech industry coalition committed to ensuring all Americans benefit from technological leaps. 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 are strong supporters of autonomous vehicles because of the potential to save hundreds of thousands of lives and benefit our communities.

Therefore, we urge your committee to **support SB 5594**, which will ensure the safe ushering in of fully autonomous vehicles without a human driver and create uniformity in AV policies across the state.

In 2022, the number of traffic-related deaths in Washington state surpassed 745, a record number in the last 30 years.¹ Research shows that at least 90% of car crashes are caused by human error,² and studies suggest that putting AVs on the road now could save hundreds of thousands of lives over the long term.

In addition to improving roadway safety outcomes, AVs have the potential to promote sustainability, mitigate transit gaps, combat food insecurity, and increase mobility for the elderly and disabled in Washington.

¹ <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/state/washington/article271847372.html>

² <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812115>

While Governor Inslee signed an executive order in 2017 supporting the safe testing and operation of autonomous vehicles in Washington³, some municipalities in the state have recently raised questions about AV testing within their communities.

SB 5594 addresses many of the concerns raised regarding AV safety, by explicitly stating that AVs must include a human safety driver until they are able to meet a confidence threshold. In order for an AV to reach the point of being able to be operated without a human safety driver, it must be able to achieve a minimal risk condition if a failure of the ADS occurs, comply with traffic and motor vehicle laws, and comply with federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS) when required by federal law.

While the existing state AV law does not explicitly give municipalities a role in regulating AVs, we commend the authors, Senator Boehnke and Senator Ngyuen, for taking steps to address concerns voiced by the city of Seattle. For example, this bill imposes new requirements that AV operators self-certify prior to testing; provide safety and collision reporting; and provide a law enforcement interaction plan. In addition, the bill requires operator to retain a liability insurance policy no less than \$5million for any damages caused by the operation of an AV.

Through this bill, municipalities would be able to participate in the welcoming of AVs by requiring crash reports to be shared with cities.

With the tremendous potential of AVs to make Washington 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 **support SB 5594**.

Thank you.

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<https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/inslee-signs-executive-order-support-safe-testing-and-operation-autonomous-vehicles>