



February 7, 2023

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Majority Leader
Legislative Office Building, 907
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Carl Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Legislative Office Building, 932
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Liz Krueger
Chairwoman, Senate Finance
Capitol Building, 416
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Helene Weinstein
Chairwoman, Assembly Ways & Means
Legislative Office Building, 923
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Tim Kennedy
Chairman, Senate Transportation
Legislative Office Building, 708
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable William B. Magnarelli
Chairman, Assembly Transportation
Legislative Office Building, 830
Albany, NY 12248

Re: SUPPORT - New York State Executive Budget for FY 2024, Autonomous Vehicle Technology Extender

On behalf of Chamber of Progress, a tech industry association working to ensure that all Americans benefit from technological leaps, I write to support Governor Hochul's proposed amendment in the New York State Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 to Section 3 part FF of chapter 55 of the laws of 2017, **relating to motor vehicles equipped with autonomous vehicle technology**. This provision would extend the current deadline for testing autonomous vehicle technology from April 2023 to April 2024.

We are strong proponents of autonomous vehicles because of the potential to save hundreds of thousands of lives and benefit our communities – promoting sustainability, creating job opportunities, mitigating transit gaps, combating food insecurity, and increasing mobility for the elderly and disabled.

Autonomous vehicles will lead to safer streets and reduce the number of accidents. Tragically, in 2022, there were more than 247 traffic-related fatalities in New York City

alone. Research shows that at least 90% of car crashes are caused by human error, and studies suggest that putting AVs on the road now could save hundreds of thousands of lives over the long term.¹

In addition to major improvements in traffic safety, AVs have the ability to serve New York's disadvantaged minority and disabled population by closing food and transit accessibility gaps.

All New York residents should have access to healthy, affordable food options in their neighborhoods. Residents in low-food access areas continue to be plagued by the food desert crisis and are forced to travel far away to get to grocery stores. In some communities, AVs are delivering groceries and food via low-speed, seatless, passengerless autonomous vehicles. This would give New York residents that live outside food-rich areas the same convenient and affordable access to fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, and meat they need to live happily and healthily.

AVs will also help close the accessibility gap. One in five adult New Yorkers live with a disability.² Though public transit is available, it is harder for those with disabilities to navigate by bus or train in times of inclement weather, when an accessible stop is shut down, or when there is no room for their equipment on a busy day. For the blind and other people living with disabilities, safe autonomous vehicles can't arrive fast enough.

Traditional transit systems have historically contributed to inequality for disadvantaged minority and disabled communities. By leveraging this new technology, AVs will significantly reduce transportation obstacles for millions of Americans.³

With the tremendous potential of AVs to make New York a safer and more equitable place, it is critically important to test, improve, and deploy AVs without delay. For the reasons cited above, Chamber of Progress proudly supports the Governor's budget and we welcome the opportunity to engage with you further to achieve this shared goal.

Sincerely,

¹ Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (February 2015) <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812115>
²<https://www.health.ny.gov/community/disability/prevalence.htm#:~:text=Based%20on%20responses%20to%20the.an%20impairment%20or%20health%20condition.>

³Self-Driving Cars: The Impact on People with Disabilities (January 2017)
https://rudermanfoundation.org/white_papers/self-driving-cars-the-impact-on-people-with-disabilities

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jamie Pascal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jamie" and last name "Pascal" clearly distinguishable.

Jamie Pascal
Director of Civic Innovation Policy
Chamber of Progress