



February 21, 2023

The Honorable David Osbourne
Chairman, Committee on Committees
Capitol Annex, 702 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

Re: Chamber of Progress Letter of Support for HB135

Dear Chair Osbourne and members of the committee:

On behalf of the Chamber of Progress, a tech industry coalition promoting technology's progressive future, I write to **support HB 135**, which will establish a framework for the safe deployment of fully autonomous vehicles in Kentucky.

We are strong supporters of autonomous vehicles because of the 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. In 2022, there were over 700 reported traffic-related fatalities in Kentucky.¹ While the number of traffic deaths slightly decreased from 806 in 2021, the numbers remain too high. 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.

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.³ According to the Southwest Research Institute, through connectivity and automation, vehicles can reach 20% improvement in fuel efficiency.⁴ Since autonomous

¹ <https://transportation.ky.gov/HighwaySafety/Pages/default.aspx>

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

³ <https://greenerideal.com/news/vehicles/driverless-cars-environmental-benefits/>

⁴ <https://www.swri.org/press-release/vehicle-fuel-efficiency-improvement-connectivity-automation-arpa-e-nextcar>

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 food⁵ 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.

By authorizing the operation of autonomous vehicles without a human driver and implementing smart safety standards, HB 153 can make Kentucky roads safer, protect the environment, and increase access to food and jobs. With the tremendous potential of AVs to make Kentucky a safer and more equitable place, it is so important to test, improve, and deploy AVs without delay.

For the reasons cited above, Chamber of Progress supports HB 153 and requests an “AYE” vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Marshall", enclosed within a simple, hand-drawn oval border.

Kouri Marshall
Chamber of Progress

⁵ <https://www.businessfleet.com/327304/nuro-avs-to-deliver-kroger-groceries-in-houston>