



February 10, 2023

The Honorable Charles Busby
Chair, House Transportation
Mississippi House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 202
400 High Street
Jackson, MS 39201

Re: Chamber of Progress Letter of Support for SB 2569

Dear Chair Busby and members of the House of Representatives:

On behalf of the Chamber of Progress, a tech industry coalition promoting technology's progressive future, I write to **support SB 2569**, which will authorize the testing and operation of fully autonomous vehicles without a human driver.

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, Mississippi had the second highest rate of fatalities per 100 million miles traveled,¹ with 472 traffic deaths in the first half of the year.² Traffic fatalities have been increasing in Mississippi since 2019, reaching 720 deaths in 2021.³ While the rate of serious injuries decreased, the numbers remain too high, with 3,264 people sustaining serious injuries on the road in 2021.⁴ Research shows that at least 90% of car crashes are caused by human error,⁵ and studies suggest that putting AVs on the road now could save hundreds of thousands of lives over the long term.

1

<https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2022/10/05/mississippi-traffic-fatalities-down-10-percent/69514666007/>

² <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813376>

³ https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2022-05/MS_FY2021_AR.pdf

⁴ https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2022-05/MS_FY2021_AR.pdf

⁵ <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812115>

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.⁶ According to the Southwest Research Institute, through connectivity and automation, vehicles can reach 20% improvement in fuel efficiency.⁷ 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 food⁸ 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, SB 2569 can make Mississippi's roads safer, protect the environment, and increase access to food and jobs. With the tremendous potential of AVs to make Mississippi 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 SB 2569 and requests an "AYE" vote.

Sincerely,

Kouri Marshall
Chamber of Progress

⁶ <https://greenerideal.com/news/vehicles/driverless-cars-environmental-benefits/>

⁷ <https://www.swri.org/press-release/vehicle-fuel-efficiency-improvement-connectivity-automation-arpa-e-nextcar>

⁸ <https://www.businessfleet.com/327304/nuro-avs-to-deliver-kroger-groceries-in-houston>