



April 5th, 2024

The Honorable Lori Wilson
Chair, Committee on Transportation
1021 O Street, Suite 8110
Sacramento, CA

Dear Chair Wilson,

On behalf of the Chamber of Progress, a tech industry coalition promoting technology's progressive future, I write to **oppose AB 3061**, which would hamstring autonomous vehicle innovation in California.

We are strong supporters of autonomous vehicles because of their 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.

Hidden among the transparency requirements in AB 3061 is a poison pill that could freeze operations of autonomous vehicles throughout the state. The bill's requirement that the Department of Motor Vehicles immediately suspend or revoke an autonomous vehicle operator's permit during compliance investigations, while also empowering members of the public to trigger investigations by reporting "evidence of an incident" involving autonomous vehicles, risks halting the progress AVs have made in making California's streets safer.

The DMV currently has authority to issue and suspend or revoke permits for autonomous vehicle operations. Under the current rules, the DMV will only suspend operational permits without notice if it or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration determines that the vehicles are not safe for public use or the operators misrepresented their vehicles' technology.¹ This bill would supersede the DMV's existing process, requiring them to revoke or suspend permits before even completing their investigations.

¹ <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/file/adopted-regulatory-text-pdf/>

Further, it opens the door for frivolous or malicious complaints from members of the public intended to override regulators' authority and halt AV operations. Members of the public simply don't have the technical expertise or experience within the existing reporting processes to be able adequately initiate an investigation. That authority should be reserved for state agencies with the resources and technical expertise to evaluate vehicle safety and performance.

We support responsible oversight of autonomous vehicles and transparent data reporting. **In fact, publicly available data show that autonomous vehicles outperform human drivers when it comes to safety.** A recently published study found that autonomous ridesharing services in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Phoenix experienced 57% fewer police-reported crashes and 85% fewer crashes involving injuries compared to human drivers.²

Autonomous vehicles are also popular among Californian. A survey commissioned by Chamber of Progress found that 53% of voters are ready to ride in an AV now or in the next five years, and the same number supported the testing and deployment of AVs in their state.³ Union members also overwhelmingly support the deployment of AVs, with 75% of respondents saying they supported testing AVs in their state.

In San Francisco, in the month after they were opened to the public, autonomous rideshare services logged over 26,000 paid trips with over 36,000 passengers.⁴ Voters and California residents are excited about the possibilities of autonomous vehicles.

²<https://waymo.com/blog/2023/12/waymo-significantly-outperforms-comparable-human-benchmarks-over-7-million/>

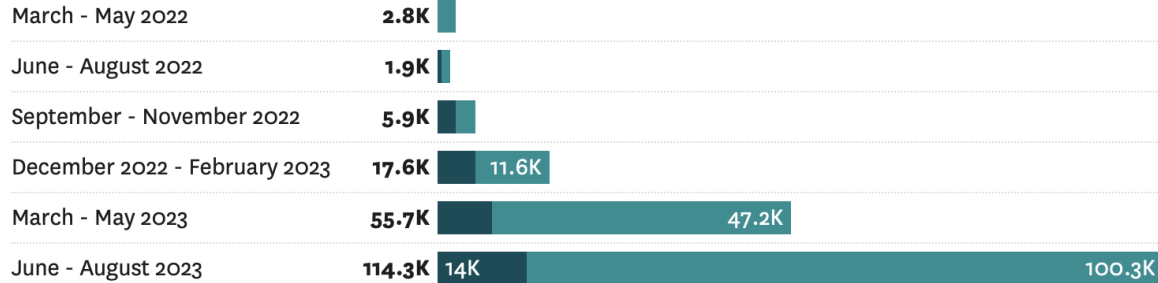
³<https://progresschamber.org/morning-consult-poll-dems-biden-voters-union-members-support-autonomous-vehicles/>

⁴ <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/cruise-waymo-san-francisco-18472568.php>

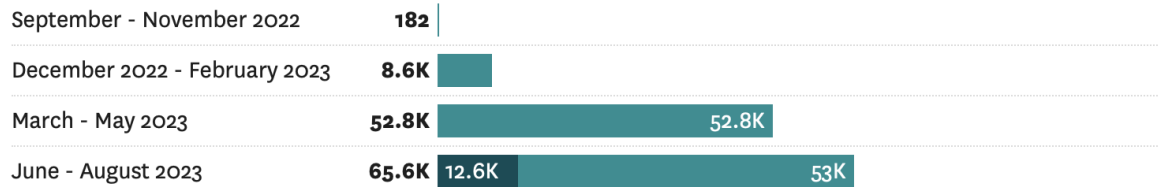
Total completed driverless trips by Cruise and Waymo

■ Paid trips ■ Unpaid trips

Cruise



Waymo



Quarterly figures include reported driverless trips completed by Cruise and Waymo autonomous vehicles using driverless pilot and deployment permits. Waymo was permitted to start driverless ride-hail trips only in November 2022.

Chart: Sriharsha Devulapalli / The Chronicle - Source: California Public Utilities Commission

Autonomous vehicles can help mitigate transit gaps. Traditional transit systems have historically contributed to inequality for disabled communities. More than 1.1 million Californians report having some type of disability in 2022. Only 54% of Californians between the ages of 25 and 54 with disabilities participate in the labor force, compared to 84% of Californians in the same age group without disabilities.⁵ A study by the National Disability Institute found that the labor force participation gap for people with disabilities is caused in part by limited mobility options, and that autonomous vehicles can help mitigate the gap by providing safe, accessible transportation.⁶

Despite many cities' best efforts, California's roads remain deadly for drivers and pedestrians. Since 2016, 19 cities have implemented Vision Zero plans to

5

<https://www.ppic.org/publication/labor-force-participation-in-california/#:~:text=Labor%20force%20participation%20is%20significantly,%E2%86%92>

6

<https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ndi-economicimpactsofremovingtransportationbarriers.pdf>

eliminate traffic-related deaths,⁷ but the number of deaths has only increased in the last few years. Between 2019 and 2022, traffic fatalities increased in California by 22%.⁸ Nearly 10 years after Los Angeles adopted its Vision Zero goal, traffic fatalities outpaced homicides in 2023.⁹ Freezing the operations of autonomous vehicles throughout the state will only make the roads less safe. We urge you to oppose this bill.

Sincerely,



Robert Singleton
Director of Policy and Public Affairs, California and US West

⁷ <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/zero-deaths/vision-zero-cop/vision-zero-action-plans>

⁸ <https://tripnet.org/reports/traffic-safety-california-news-release-06-21-2023/>

⁹ <https://abc7.com/los-angeles-lapd-crime-statistics-homicide/14356841/#:~:text=Shootings%20were%20down%2010%25%20in.%25%20to%20336%2C%20surpassed%20homicides.>