



September 3, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the Chamber of Progress, a tech industry coalition promoting technology's progressive future, I write to urge you to **veto AB 2286**. This bill is nearly identical to last year's AB 316 and would hamstring innovation in California by blocking the development of autonomous trucks.

AB 2286 fails to address any of the concerns raised when you vetoed AB 316 last year. Dee Dee Myers, Director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), argued last year that AB 316 would undermine existing oversight and hamper economic competitiveness. In her words, "our state is on the cusp of a new era and cannot risk stifling innovation at this critical juncture".¹ As you noted when vetoing last year's bill, "existing law provides sufficient authority to create the appropriate regulatory framework" for autonomous vehicles.²

AB 2286 would have the same effect as AB 316 – undermining existing oversight and stifling innovation in California.

We are strong supporters of autonomous trucking as an important solution to the growing demand for timely shipping of agricultural goods and products. Autonomous trucking in California is essential for continued growth of the agricultural sector and the well-being of California's farmers, the entire Central Valley economy, and food distribution to communities around the nation. Increased demand for food and other products coupled with the lack of available

¹ <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=0000018a-1e52-d2a3-a3fe-ffffaa3a20000>

² <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/AB-316-Veto-Message.pdf>

human workforce threatens all farmers' ability to transport agricultural goods domestically and overseas.

Turnover in the trucking industry is very high. According to the American Trucking Associations, the average annual turnover rate for long haul drivers at big firms is 90%.³ Trucks move about 71% of the economy's products across the country, but the industry faces a shortage of about 80,000 drivers.⁴

In 2021, the Port of Los Angeles reported that 30% of their port's appointments for truckers were going unused, largely because of the driver shortage.⁵

Autonomous trucks can help fill the gap at our ports, reducing pressure on prices for California families.

Furthermore, voters support the testing and deployment of autonomous technology. A survey commissioned by our organization found that 60% of Democratic voters and 75% of labor union members supported autonomous vehicles being tested in their state.⁶

Autonomous trucks can also reduce long-term environmental costs from pollution.

While trucks represent only 6% of vehicles on the road in California, they produce over 35% of transportation-generated nitrous oxide and 25% of on-road greenhouse gas emissions.⁷ The California Air Resources Board's decision to require all trucks to be zero-emission by 2042 is an important step forward in addressing pollution, but it is only one piece of the puzzle.

Since autonomous vehicles can be programmed to optimize their routes and follow traffic rules and speeds, autonomous trucks will ultimately use energy

³Michelle Fleury, *How will the US deal with a shortage of 80,000 truckers?*, BBC News, (Dec. 2021)
<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59136957>

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<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2022/01/12/there-is-a-massive-trucker-shortage-causing-supply-chain-disruptions-and-high-inflation/?sh=71a115455ec4>

⁵Madeleine Ngo, *The Biggest Kink in America's Supply Chain: Not Enough Truckers*, NY Times, (Nov. 2021)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/us/politics/trucker-shortage-supply-chain.html>

⁶

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

⁷ California moves to phase-out diesel-powered trucks, cut locomotive pollution, Reuters (2023)
<https://www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/california-moves-phase-out-diesel-powered-trucks-cut-locomotive-pollution-2023-04-28/>

more efficiently. By adopting autonomous trucking and requiring zero emissions vehicles, California can maximize transportation and energy efficiency.

The risks associated with last year's bill have not been addressed with AB 2286. The bill would stifle innovation, undermine existing oversight, and deny Californians the economic and environmental benefits of autonomous trucks. We applaud your previous leadership on this issue and ask that you continue to defend innovation in California. **We urge you to veto AB 2286.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Singleton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a stylized "S".

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