



March 26, 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 2286, which would hamstring innovation in California by requiring a human to be present even after autonomous trucks have demonstrated their safety.

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

Additionally, 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%.¹ Trucks move about 71% of the economy's products across the country, but the industry faces a shortage of about 80,000 drivers.²

High turnover and widespread job vacancies result in significant delays to product shipments and rising prices for basic necessities. In 2021, the Port of Los

¹Michelle Fleury, *How will the US deal with a shortage of 80,000 truckers?*, BBC News, (Dec. 2021)
<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59136957>

²

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

Angeles reported that 30% of their port's appointments for truckers were going unused, largely because of the driver shortage.³ **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.⁴

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.⁵ 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 more efficiently. By adopting autonomous trucking and requiring zero emissions vehicles, California can maximize transportation and energy efficiency.

Finally, this bill fails to address any of the concerns the Governor raised when vetoing AB 316 last year. Dee Dee Myers, Director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), raised concerns that AB 316, which was nearly identical to AB 2286, 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".⁶ As Governor Newsom said when vetoing the bill, "existing law provides sufficient authority to create the appropriate regulatory framework" for autonomous vehicles.⁷

³Madeleine 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>

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

⁵ 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/>

⁶ <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=0000018a-1e52-d2a3-a3fe-ffffaa3a20000>

⁷ <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/AB-316-Veto-Message.pdf>

AB 2286 would have the same effect—undermining existing oversight and stifling innovation in California. We urge you to oppose this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Singleton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being more prominent than the last name "Singleton".

Robert Singleton

Director of Policy and Public Affairs, California and US West