



Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legislative Initiatives Relating to Autonomous Vehicles

City of Austin Mobility Committee & Public Safety Committee Joint Meeting | April 29, 2026

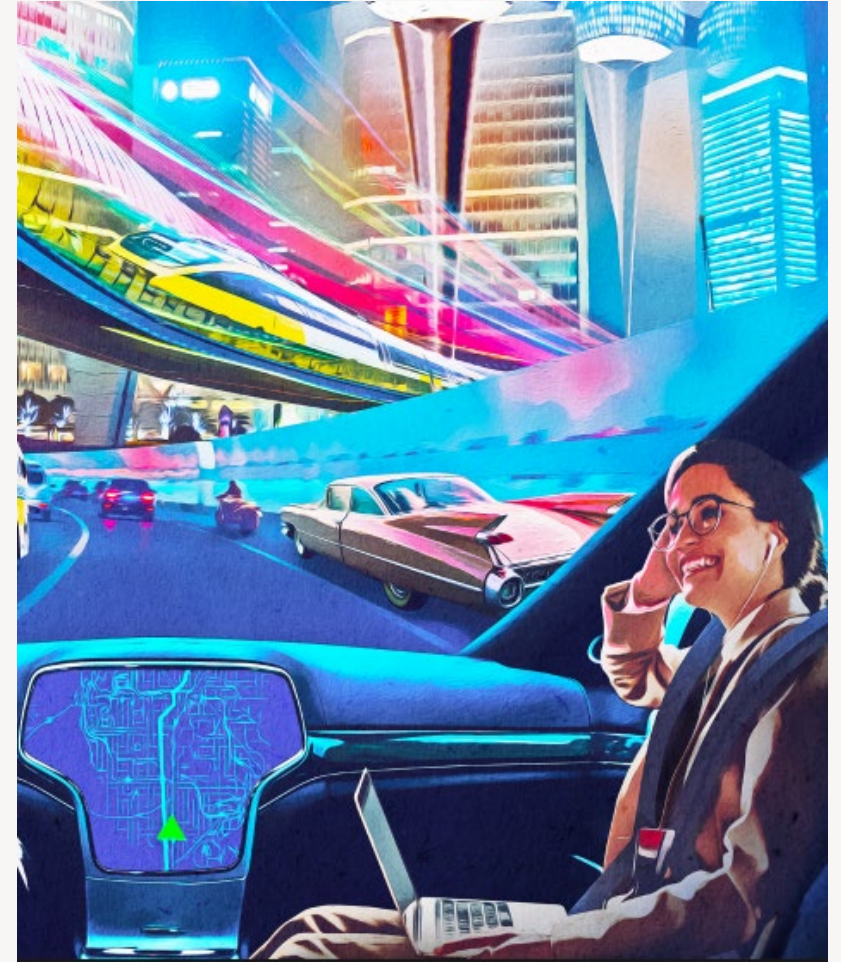
Carrie Rogers, Government Relations Officer

AV Federal Legislative History

Federal AV Legislation: Overview



- Congress has renewed work on a national framework for AVs in 2026.
- Key focus areas:
 - Safety-case standards for automated driving systems (ADS),
 - Crash-data reporting and transparency,
 - Cybersecurity requirements,
 - Federal vs. state/local authority.
- Federal agencies advancing AV rulemaking in parallel.
- The 2026 Surface Transportation Reauthorization, which occurs every five years, creates a policy window for advancing AV legislation.



Federal AV Legislation (H.R. 7390)



- **H.R. 7390 – SELF DRIVE Act of 2026** (*Safely Ensuring Lives Future Deployment and Research In Vehicle Evolution Act of 2026*)
 - Introduced by Representative Bob Latta (R-OH).
 - Approved by the Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee by a party line vote of 12-11.
 - Despite the party line vote, Latta and Representative Debbie Dingell (D-MI) say they will continue to work together to produce bipartisan AV legislation that can pass the House, on its own as part of the broader surface transportation reauthorization bill.

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7390

To amend title 49, United States Code, regarding the authority of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration over vehicles with automated driving systems to provide safety measures for such vehicles, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 5, 2026

Mr. Latta introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend title 49, United States Code, regarding the authority of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration over vehicles with automated driving systems to provide safety measures for such vehicles, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the

5 “Safely Ensuring Lives Future Deployment and Research

H.R. 7390 Key Provisions



- **HR 7390 would add a new section to the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act ([49 USC Chapter 301](#)). It would:**
 - Require the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to issue a final rule by September 30, 2027 for AVs that based on [SAE International standards](#) for [Levels 3, 4, and 5](#) AVs, and authorize NHTSA to update their regulations to reflect updates in SAE International standards,
 - Allow the NHTSA rule to outline objective content requirements for AV safety cases,
 - Require that AV manufacturers make safety cases available to NHTSA,
 - Require that passenger carrying AVs allow occupants to take control of and safely exit the vehicle,
 - Require NHTSA to establish a “National Automated Vehicle Safety Data Repository” and require AV manufacturers to report data regarding serious crashes and provide quarterly reports on total miles traveled in self-driving mode.

H.R. 7390 Key Provisions (Continued)



- **HR 7390 would add a new section to the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act ([49 USC Chapter 301](#)). It would:**
 - Preempt state and local governments from requiring manufacturers of AVs with a safety case report information about a crash,
 - Clarify that the preemption paragraph does not limit or preempt state or local authority over traffic laws, vehicle registration, safety and emissions inspections, congestion management of vehicles, insurance, generally applicable consumer protection laws, or environmental laws or regulations, and
 - Expand National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act testing exemption provision to allow for limited commercial use of non-compliant AVs.

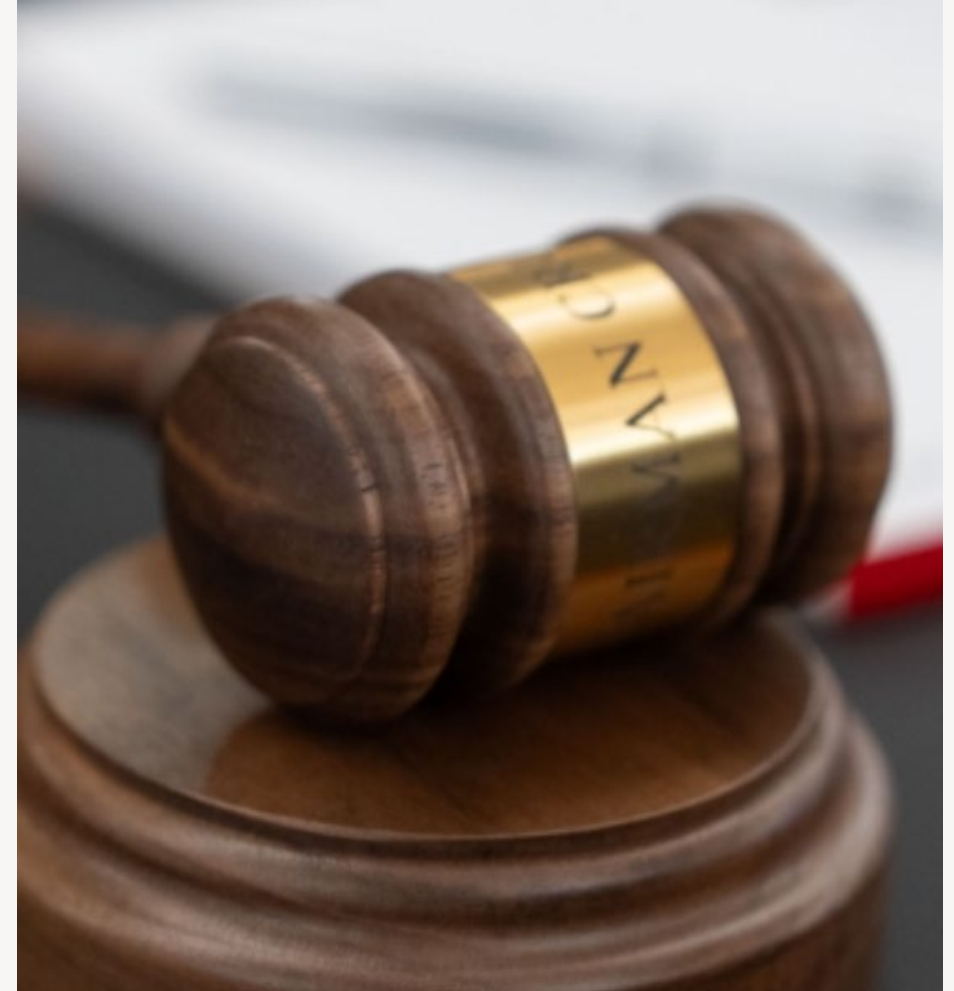
H.R. 7390 Opponent Arguments



- The bill only requires NHTSA to develop subjective standards for AV safety cases (using words like “sufficient” or “likely”); it does not mandate objective safety standards or performance requirements, which is the generally used applied in current law.
- The safety case approach relies on manufacturer self-certification and only requires that manufacturers make their safety cases available to NHTSA “upon request.”
- It would preempt state and local governments before NHTSA issued its final rule.
- It does not adequately address AV cybersecurity.

Senate Commerce Committee

- The leaders of the Committee have not introduced legislation, but the Committee recently [held a hearing](#) on AV policy:
 - Senator Edward Markey (D-MA), a proponent of strong AV safety standards and a leader of Senate opposition to the 2017-2018 AV bill, recently released a [report](#) critical of the AV industry's reliance on Remote Assistance Operators (RAOs).





National Highway Safety Traffic Administration (NHSTA)

- **In 2025, NHTSA' issued its Automated Vehicle Framework. The framework has three broad principles:**
 - Issued three proposed rules to implement the Framework and,
 - Extended the “Part 555” process that allows manufacturers to sell up to 2,500 AVs per year that do not fully comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS),
 - Enable Commercial Deployment of AVs.

- **Since then, NHTSA has:**
 - Issued three proposed rules to implement the Framework and
 - Extended the “Part 555” process that allows manufacturers to sell up to 2,500 AVs per year that do not fully comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS).

- In addition, USDOT issued an RFI in August 2025 asking for stakeholder input to inform AV research, which the City of Austin participated in.

Federal AV-Related Rulemaking Comments



- **DOT RFI – Research Ideas To Support Nationwide AV Deployment (October 2025)**
 - Submitted comprehensive recommendations across data standards, infrastructure readiness, emergency response, and AV system behavior.
 - Emphasized need for standardized crash, disengagement, VMT, and near-miss data.
 - Highlighted concerns related to AV interactions with first responders and vulnerable road users.
 - Recommended improved transparency, closed-course testing, and national data-sharing frameworks.

- **FHWA Waiver Modification – Buy America Requirements for EV Chargers (March 2026)**
 - Provided comments opposing the immediate shift to 100% domestic content requirements for chargers due to supply chain limitations.
 - Noted impacts on deployment timelines, cost increases, and reduced vendor availability.
 - Recommended a phased or capacity-approach to support both deployment and domestic manufacturing growth.

AV State Legislative History & Interim Hearings

State Legislative History: Major Bills



- **2017 (85th Session): SB 2205 (Hancock) - First State AV Legislation**
 - Until the 85th Texas Legislature (2017), Texas law did not recognize automated vehicles (AVs) for testing or for operation on Texas roads.
 - In 2017, Texas passed [Senate Bill 2205](#) (Hancock), which granted the state full authority over autonomous vehicles. This legislation prohibits local governments from attempting to regulate self-driving cars.

- **2021 (87th Session) – HB 3026 (Canales)**
 - In 2021, Texas passed [House Bill 3026](#) (Canales), which allowed that when an ADS (AV) is designed to be completely operated without a human driver, then certain items are no longer required, such as mirrors, steering wheels.
 - If a vehicle safety inspection is required for the operation of such a vehicle, the vehicle must automatically be considered to pass the inspection with respect to any equipment covered by the bill's exemption or any equipment that is not subject to inspection under state law.

State Legislative History: 2025



2025 (89th Session) – SB 2807 (Hagenbuch)

- [Senate Bill 2807](#), passed in 2025, created a required authorization for the commercial operation of automated vehicles on Texas roads.
 - Companies are required to receive authorization prior to operating vehicles controlled by automated driving systems. The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) has administrative authority to issue and revoke these authorizations.
- Under SB 2807, TxDMV is responsible for:
 - Authorizing Level 4 and Level 5 AV operations, which do not require a human driver.
 - Setting safety, insurance, and operational standards for AVs.
 - Enforcing compliance through investigations, suspensions, or revocations of AV authorizations.
 - Ensuring AVs can safely respond to system failures and follow all applicable traffic laws.
- The Texas Department of Public Safety and local law enforcement agencies have authority over on-road enforcement of the operations and adherence to traffic laws.

2026 State Interim Charges



Senate Transportation Committee

Interim Hearing: 12 p.m., Wednesday, July 29, 2026

- ***Studying the Deployment of Autonomous Vehicle Technology:*** Study the deployment of autonomous vehicle technology as authorized by SB 2807, (89th Session), including rule-making adopted by the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles and the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. Quantify the impact on traffic-related collisions. Make recommendations to ensure that the continued deployment of autonomous vehicles prioritizes public safety and aligns with the evolving technological landscape on Texas roads.

AGR is currently coordinating with City departments and with Senate Transportation Committee staff in preparation for the July hearing.

Senate Committee on Transportation



Tan Parker (R)
Chair



Royce West (D)
Vice Chair



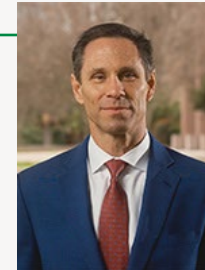
Paul Bettencourt
(R)



Brent Hagenbuch
(R)



Juan "Chuy"
Hinojosa (D)



Nathan Johnson
(D)



Phil S. King (R)



Borris L. Miles (D)



Charles Perry (R)

AV Regulations: Looking Forward

As of 2026

Draft City Legislative Agenda Items



■ Upcoming 120th Congress:

- *The City of Austin supports regulations that minimize federal preemption of local authority and **ensure the safe and responsible use of emerging technologies, including autonomous vehicles (AVs)**, artificial intelligence (AI), and prioritize data privacy.*

■ Upcoming 90th Texas Legislature:

- *The City of Austin supports regulations that **ensure the safe and responsible use of emerging technologies, including autonomous vehicles (AVs)**, artificial intelligence (AI), and prioritize data privacy.*

Questions?



Thank you!



Government Relations | 4.29.26