
SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Senator Jim Beall, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No:	SB 59	Hearing Date:	4/9/2019
Author:	Allen		
Version:	4/1/2019 Amended		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Randy Chinn		

SUBJECT: Autonomous vehicle technology: Statewide policy.

DIGEST: This bill requires the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), in coordination with the State Air Resources Board (ARB) to convene an autonomous vehicle (AV) interagency working group to guide policy development for autonomous passenger vehicles pursuant to specific principles, and report to the Legislature no later than January 1, 2021.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law authorizes the operation of autonomous vehicles on public roads for testing and non-testing purposes under certain circumstances subject to regulations adopted by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), as specified.

This bill:

- 1) Requires the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), in coordination with the State Air Resources Board (ARB) to convene an autonomous vehicle (AV) interagency working group to guide policy development for autonomous passenger vehicles. The working group shall include the State Transportation Agency, Caltrans, DMV, the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, the Strategic Growth Council, and representatives of local governments as determined by OPR.
- 2) Requires OPR to recommend to the Legislature no later than January 1, 2021 on how to further deployment of autonomous passenger vehicles consistent with the following principles:
 - a) Maximize ride-sharing and shared use of AVs
 - b) Encourage a shift toward zero emission AVs
 - c) Reduce vehicle emissions

- d) Encourage strategies to ensure vehicles are properly-sized for their purpose
- e) Encourage use of AVs as part of a multimodal transportation system
- f) Encourage the deployment of AVs to support compact infill development
- g) Encourage the deployment of AVs which increase affordable mobility options, particularly for disadvantaged communities
- h) Consider the needs of rural residents and communities

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Author's Statement.* SB 59 will ensure California plans responsibly for the potential wide-scale introduction of autonomous vehicles to prevent this innovative new technology from adding to our serious climate, clean air, and traffic challenges. Autonomous vehicles can significantly improve how Californians get around including by increasing safety. However, if not planned for deliberately, this new transportation mode could exacerbate our already daunting mobility problems leading to more traffic congestion and air pollution.
- 2) *Background.* In 2012, SB 1298 (Padilla) established conditions for the operation of automated vehicles (AV) in California. In 2014, the DMV adopted regulations for the testing of AVs on public roads requiring a test driver and established an application and approval process for a testing permit. As of April 1, 2018, there are 52 manufacturers that have this permit. In early 2018, the DMV adopted regulations for testing AVs without a driver at the wheel and for deployment of AVs in California. DMV began accepting applications for these permits on April 1, 2018.
- 3) *Uncertainty about AVs.* AVs have the potential to transform every sector of transportation. However, much is uncertain about these impacts. AVs could enhance vehicle safety by removing human error from the driving task and improve access to mobility for many people. On the other hand, AVs could create more congestion and sprawl, as it becomes more convenient to use the “free” time of riding in AVs for other tasks such as work. AVs could replace transit trips, or it could provide better first- and last-mile connectivity to increase transit use. Currently, the Legislature has limited understanding of how to plan for a “driverless” world. More recently, our unabashed support for AVs has been tempered by highly publicized accidents and misuse of AV technology, as well as concern for the impact on our workforce. This bill directs OPR to convene a wide range of stakeholders and experts to provide the

Legislature with policy recommendations on how to guide this burgeoning technology.

4) *Policy Coordination Needed.* The UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies (ITS) recently issued a series of policy briefs characterizing AVs as one of the three “revolutions” in transportation, along with electrification and shared mobility (i.e., the shared use of a vehicle on as-needed basis).¹ According to ITS, these must happen concurrently in order to bring about increased access to mobility, more affordable transportation, and major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. However, if there is just automation without shared mobility or electrification (e.g., people primarily riding in personal, gas-powered AVs), then CA could end up in a future of more vehicle miles traveled, more vehicles on the road, more sprawl, and more greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. ITS states that achieving all three revolutions together will require unprecedented levels of policy support. This bill provides the Legislature with that policy support to help coordinate how AV technology should be deployed to help improve how all Californians get around and meet the state’s climate goals.

5) *Double referral.* This bill was also referred to the Senate committee on Environmental Quality.

RELATED LEGISLATION:

SB 336 (Dodd; 2019) — Requires an on-board employee when public transit agencies deploy autonomous transit vehicles. *This bill is pending in the Senate Transportation Committee.*

SB 936 (Allen; 2018) — Requires OPR to convene an Autonomous Vehicles Smart Planning Task Force. *This bill failed passage in the Senate.*

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, Wednesday, April 3.)

¹ <https://3rev.ucdavis.edu/policybriefs/>

SUPPORT:

CALSTART

Center for Climate Change & Health

Community Environmental Council

Fossil Free California

Sierra Club California

TransForm

Union of Concerned Scientists

OPPOSITION:

TechNet

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