

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND CONVEYANCE**

Tasha Boerner, Chair

AB 2193 (Ta) – As Amended April 8, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Autonomous vehicles

**SUMMARY:** This bill establishes procedures for issuing and contesting a citation for a traffic violation in an autonomous vehicle (AV).

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes that the citation shall be issued to the manufacturer of an autonomous technology when a level 4 or 5 autonomous vehicle commits a traffic violation regardless of whether there is a person in the driver’s seat.
- 2) Establishes that a citation shall be issued to the driver when the autonomous technology is not engaged, or when in a level 3 autonomous vehicle.
- 3) Provides that a holder of a testing permit or deployment permit issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) may contest a citation or penalty under existing law.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Authorizes the operation of autonomous vehicles (AVs) on public roads for testing purposes under certain circumstances specified in DMV regulations. (Vehicle Code Section (VEH) 38750)
- 2) Defines “autonomous vehicle” to mean vehicle equipped with technology that makes it capable of operation that meets the definition of Levels 3, 4, or 5 of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) International's Taxonomy and Testing of Autonomous Vehicles Definitions for Terms Related to Driving Automation Systems for On-Road Motor Vehicles, standard J3016 (APR 2021). (VEH 38750)
- 3) Defines “autonomous technology” to mean technology that has the capability to drive a vehicle without the active physical control or monitoring by a human operator. (VEH 38750)
- 4) States that an AV does not include a vehicle that is equipped with one or more collision avoidance systems, including, but not limited to, electronic blind spot assistance, automated emergency braking systems, park assist, adaptive cruise control, lane keep assist, lane departure warning, traffic jam and queuing assist, or other similar systems that enhance safety or provide driver assistance, but are not capable, collectively or singularly, of driving the vehicle without the active control or monitoring of a human operator. (VEH 38750)
- 5) Prohibits the operation of AVs on public roads for non-testing purposes unless the manufacturer of the vehicles submits an application to DMV that is approved pursuant to DMV regulations. (VEH 38750)

- 6) Requires DMV to approve an application submitted by a manufacturer for the operation of AVs for non-testing purposes if DMV finds that the applicant has submitted all information and completed testing necessary to satisfy that the AVs are safe to operate on public roads and the applicant has complied with all requirements specified in DMV regulations. (VEH 38750)
- 7) Authorizes DMV to impose additional requirements it deems necessary to ensure the safe operation of AVs if those vehicles are capable of operating without the presence of a driver inside the vehicle. (VEH 38750)
- 8) Authorizes law enforcement to issue a “notice of autonomous vehicle noncompliance” upon observing an alleged violation of the vehicle code or an alleged violation of a local traffic ordinance adopted pursuant to the vehicle code. (VEH 38752)
- 9) Defines “a notice of autonomous vehicle noncompliance” means a notice issued by a peace officer that identifies, at minimum, an alleged violation of this code or an alleged violation of a local traffic ordinance adopted pursuant to this code by an autonomous vehicle while the autonomous technology is engaged, the date, time, and location of the alleged violation, and the license plate number of the vehicle. (VEH 38752)
- 10) Requires an AV manufacturer to provide any issued notice of AV noncompliance to DMV within 72 hours of issuance, or within a timeframe otherwise determined by DMV. (VEH 38752)
- 11) Provides that the issuance of the AV noncompliance does not create a presumption that the AV is unsafe and does not limit the manufacturer’s ability to contest the nature or occurrence of the alleged violation identified in the notice. (VEH 38752)
- 12) Provides that that the notice of AV noncompliance does not come into effect until DMV regulations are established and authorizes DMV to establish regulations for notices for and processes for AV noncompliance. (VEH 38752)
- 13) Establishes the “Passenger Charter-Party Carriers’ Act” to, in part, promote carrier and public safety through safety enforcement regulations. (Public Utilities Code §5351 et. seq.)
- 14) Defines a charter-party carrier of passengers as every person engaged in the transportation of persons by motor vehicle for compensation over any public highway in this state. A charter-party carrier of passengers includes any person, corporation, or other entity engaged in the provision of a hired driver service when a rented motor vehicle is being operated by a hired driver. (Public Utilities Code §5360)
- 15) Authorizes the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to supervise and regulate every charter-party carrier of passengers. (Public Utilities Code §5381).

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown. This bill has been keyed fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) *Double referral and committee jurisdiction.* This bill was first heard in the Assembly Transportation Committee, which has primary jurisdiction over the Vehicle Code and rules of the road. Accordingly, this analysis will primarily focus on policy issued within the jurisdiction of this committee, which includes charter-party carriers utilizing autonomous vehicles and associated matters.
- 2) *Purpose of the bill.* This bill is intended to address liability when an autonomous vehicle violates the rules of the road by providing a mechanism for issuing citations to autonomous vehicles. According to the author “AB 2193 ensures that when an autonomous vehicle violates traffic law, someone is accountable. As the use of driverless vehicles expands on our roads, we must ensure our law enforcement framework keeps pace with technology. AB 2193 protects passengers, supports law enforcement, and ensures that companies deploying autonomous vehicles remain responsible for their operations. Innovation should move forward, but it must do so safely and responsibly by holding driverless cars to the same standards as other drivers.”
- 3) *AV Levels.* Existing law defines an “autonomous vehicle” to mean a vehicle equipped with technology that makes it capable of operation that meets the definition of Levels 3, 4, or 5 of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) International's Taxonomy and Testing of Autonomous Vehicles Definitions for Terms Related to Driving Automation Systems for On-Road Motor Vehicles, standard J3016 (Version April 2021). According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration<sup>1</sup> Level 3 is described as “conditional automation”, wherein the driving system handles all aspects of driving while a driver remains available to take over driving if necessary. Level 4 and Level 5 are high and full automation, where human operators are not necessary to operate the vehicle. What distinguishes Level 4 from Level 5 is that Level 5 are able to operate under all conditions and on all roadways, whereas Level 4 has a limited service area or operational domain.

This bill would establish different procedure for issuing a citation depending on whether the vehicle is being operated as a Level 3, Level 4 or Level 5. In particular, a citation would be issued to a human when it is being operated in Level 3. However, it would be reasonable to issue the citation to the manufacturer in Level 4 and Level 5 because there may not be a human driver or the human driver would not have been responsible for the vehicle's operation. In other words, they are merely a passenger in a Level 4 or Level 5 scenario instead of a driver with responsibility for operating the vehicle.

- 4) *AVs in California.* The Legislature passed SB 1298 (Padilla), Chapter 570, Statutes of 2012 which permitted AVs to operate on public roads for testing by a driver under certain conditions. In 2014, DMV released regulations to allow for testing AVs with a test driver, and in April 2018, DMV finalized regulations for the testing and deployment of AVs on public roads without a driver. Thirty-six companies currently have a permit for testing with a driver (down from a high of 58), and six companies have received a permit for testing without a driver. Three companies have received a deployment permit without a human driver. One company has a deployment permit for a Level 3 AV, which requires a human

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<sup>1</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Image describing “Levels of Automation”.  
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2022-05/Level-of-Automation-052522-tag.pdf>

operator. One or two companies currently have a deployment permit. One company, Cruise, has lost both its deployment permit and its permit to test without a human operator.

Among the companies authorized to operate AVs in California, several participate in a pilot program administered by the CPUC to utilize AVs as charter party carriers. In general, charter party carriers are private vehicle carriers moving passengers between points in the state for a fee. For example, Waymo and Uber are charter party carriers under existing law. In total, there are 5 companies participating in the CPUC pilot. Among the five AV manufacturers in the CPUC pilot, only one company (Waymo LLC) is authorized for full driverless deployment, whereas the others are still operating on a pilot basis with or without a driver. In other words, most of the manufacturers in the CPUC pilot are Level 3 or Level 4.

This bill provisions then would have some impact on the CPUC's pilot to extent that passengers utilizing full autonomous vehicles (like Waymo) would not face liability for the vehicle's operations as it pertains to the rules of the road. This change would serve to provide some needed clarity, as there have been various documented instances where autonomous vehicles have violated the rules of the road with paying passengers inside the vehicle.

#### 5) *Recent/related legislation.*

- a. SB 1246 (Cortese) of 2026 requires remote operators of an AV to be located in the State of California, requires AVs to maintain a dedicated emergency response telephone line available for emergency response officials, requires an AV to have a manual override system, amongst other things. That bill is set for a hearing in Senate Transportation Committee.
- b. AB 33 (Aguilar-Curry) Prohibits an autonomous vehicle (AV) without a human operator from delivering commercial goods directly to a residence or to a business for its use or retail sale. That bill is pending on the Senate Floor.
- c. AB 1777 (Ting) Chapter 682, Statutes of 2024, established a process to permit law enforcement officers to issue an AV notice of noncompliance when an AV allegedly violated a section of the vehicle code or an ordinance created by the vehicle code, amongst other things.
- d. SB 1298 (Padilla), Chapter 570, Statutes of 2012 established conditions for the operation of AVs upon public roadways.

#### **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

##### **Support**

California Federation of Labor Unions, Afl-cio  
California Safety and Legislative Board, Smart – Transportation Division (smart – Td)  
Streets are for Everyone (SAFE) (ORG)

##### **Opposition**

None on file.

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