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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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## SB 1246 (Cortese) - Autonomous vehicles

**Version:** March 24, 2026

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** May 14, 2026

**Policy Vote:** TRANS. 8 - 3, JUD. 9 - 3

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Mark McKenzie

**Bill Summary:** SB 1246 would impose new requirements on autonomous vehicle (AV) operators and autonomous passenger service vehicles related to remote assistants, drivers, local incident technicians, emergency response procedures, manual override systems, and data management, as specified.

### \*\*\*\*\* ANALYSIS ADDENDUM – SUSPENSE FILE \*\*\*\*\*

The following information is revised to reflect amendments  
adopted by the committee on May 14, 2026

#### Fiscal Impact:

- The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) would incur one-time costs, likely in the range of \$115,000, to develop and adopt regulations related to new requirements imposed on AV operators. Requirements to post specified summary statistics reported by AV operators on its website would be minor and absorbable. (Motor Vehicle Account)
- Unknown California Highway Patrol (CHP) ongoing costs, likely in the millions of dollars annually, for new staff to implement the provisions of the bill, and additional costs in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars annually for software development and maintenance. Primary cost drivers include reviewing and approving all manual override systems, and developing uniform guidelines and requirements for specified training regarding the use of manual override systems. Staff notes that the bill provides CHP the authority to charge fees for specified activities, but it is unknown whether those fees could be set at a level sufficient to fully offset all of CHP's personnel costs. (Motor Vehicle Account)

#### Author Amendments:

- Delete the requirement for CHP to conduct a certification and registration program for local incident technicians.
- Specify that local incident technicians may be employees of an entity contracted with an AV operator to provide technician services that employs 50 or more technicians.
- Delete the requirement for a technician to respond and be on the scene within 10 minutes, and instead require that they be immediately dispatched upon notification of an accident or incident, or upon receiving a request from a first responder or 911 dispatch center. An AV operator must ensure that technicians are present at the scene of an incident within 20 minutes of receiving notification, as specified, no less than 90% of the time.
- Change the staffing ratio for remote assistants or remote drivers to autonomous passenger service vehicles from one to three to one to five or higher at all times.

**Committee Amendments:** Strike provisions from the author's amendments that would require the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), rather than the CHP, to develop manual override training guidelines and a training course and guidelines for law enforcement officers on commercial AVs, as specified.

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