

Date of Hearing: June 30, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Ash Kalra, Chair
SB 1315 (Cabaldon) – As Amended June 24, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 38-0

SUBJECT: ADVANCED DRIVER ASSISTANCE SYSTEMS

SYNOPSIS

Advancements in technology are making cars more and more autonomous. These advancements have resulted in cars becoming less machine-like and now better resemble highly sophisticated computers on wheels. Accordingly, more and more automotive maintenance is being conducted via software updates. As it relates to systems that drivers rely upon for vehicle automation it is imperative that drivers understand the limits of the automated system and what impacts a software might have for automated features.

This bill would prohibit a manufacturer of an automobile in this state from requiring or providing a software update that either removes, disables, or materially restricts a driver's ability to manually engage or disengage an advanced autonomous driving system in a vehicle that was available at the time of the vehicle's original retail sale or requires a driver to engage an advanced autonomous driving system as a condition of operating the vehicle under a condition in which manual operation was previously available. This should ensure that drivers remain aware of the capabilities of their vehicle. The bill would impose civil penalties for violations of these provisions. The bill also directs the Department of Motor Vehicles to consider amending the driver's exam to include questions about vehicle automation.

This author-sponsored measure has no registered support or opposition. Tesla Motors has raised "concerns" with the bill and contend it may not do what the author seeks to achieve. Those concerns involved the aspects of the bill that are wholly outside the jurisdiction of this Committee. This bill was previously heard and approved by the Committee on Transportation by a vote of 15 to zero.

SUMMARY: Prohibits a manufacturer of an automobile in this state from requiring or providing a software update that either removes, disables, or materially restricts a driver's ability to manually engage or disengage an advanced autonomous driving system in a vehicle that was available at the time of the vehicle's original retail sale or requires a driver to engage an advanced autonomous driving system as a condition of operating the vehicle under a condition in which manual operation was previously available. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Provides that, notwithstanding any other law, the manufacturer of an advanced driver assistance system, or an automobile equipped with an advanced driver assistance system, shall ensure a driver is able to disable or disengage either an advanced driver assistance system or autonomous technology as a condition of operating the vehicle under a condition in which manual operation was previously available.
- 2) Provides that a violation of 1) is not a Vehicle Code infraction.

- 3) Provides that a violation of 1) is not a violation of the Unfair Business Practice Act.
- 4) Provides that in lieu of an infraction or an unfair business practice, a violation of 1) is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) per violation.
- 5) Provides that the civil penalties provided in 4) may be sought in a civil action brought by the Attorney General, a district attorney, or a city attorney.
- 6) Requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to consider at the next regularly scheduled revision of the drivers examination to consider adding one or more questions addressing all of the following:
 - a) The distinction between the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) International's Level 2 of driving automation, defined in standard J3016 (APR2021), as may be revised, which requires the driver to remain engaged and responsible for the dynamic driving task at all times, and higher levels of driving automation, which assume primary control of vehicle operation;
 - b) The legal liability of a driver who operates a vehicle while an advanced driver assistance system is engaged, including their ongoing responsibility to monitor the driving environment and intervene if necessary; or
 - c) The limitations of advanced driver assistance systems, including the conditions under which those systems may disengage or request driver intervention.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Defines "autonomous vehicle" as 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 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). (Vehicle Code Section 38750 (a)(2)(A).)
- 2) Defines "advanced driver assistance system" as a Level 2 of Society of Automotive Engineers International's Taxonomy and Definitions for Terms Related to Driving Automation Systems for On-Road Motor Vehicles, standard J3016 (APR 2021). (Vehicle Code Section 28155.)
- 3) Prohibits a vehicle from being equipped with a device that is specifically designed for, marketed for, or being used for, neutralizing, disabling, or otherwise interfering with a driver monitoring system that is engaged when drivers are utilizing advanced driver assistance system features or autonomous technology, as defined. (*Ibid.*)
- 4) Provides that an autonomous vehicle may be operated on public roads for testing purposes by a driver who possesses the proper class of license for the type of vehicle being operated if all of the following requirements are met:
 - a) The autonomous vehicle is being operated on roads in this state solely by employees, contractors, or other persons designated by the manufacturer of the autonomous technology;

- b) The driver must be seated in the driver's seat, monitoring the safe operation of the autonomous vehicle, and capable of taking over immediate manual control of the autonomous vehicle in the event of an autonomous technology failure or other emergency;
 - c) Prior to the start of testing in this state, the manufacturer performing the testing must obtain an instrument of insurance, surety bond, or proof of self-insurance in the amount of five million dollars (\$5,000,000), and provide evidence of the insurance, surety bond, or self-insurance to the Department of Motor Vehicles. (Vehicle Code Section 38750 (b).)
- 5) Establishes the Unfair Practices Act to safeguard the public against the creation or perpetuation of monopolies and to foster and encourage competition, by prohibiting unfair, dishonest, deceptive, destructive, fraudulent and discriminatory practices by which fair and honest competition is destroyed or prevented. (Business and Professions Code Section 17000 *et seq.*)

FISCAL EFFECT: As currently in print this bill is keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS: Autonomous vehicle technology is rapidly expanding. From “autopilot” technologies built into some consumer vehicles to driverless taxis, California’s roadways are increasingly occupied with cars that can largely drive themselves. However, as advanced as these technologies are becoming, they are not yet at a level to fully drive the car without human oversight. Given this, many drivers with cars that have some degree of automation seek to ensure that they can maintain control of the vehicle if necessary. This bill would ensure that auto manufacturers cannot push software updates to cars that override driver control features. The bill applies a civil penalty for non-compliance. In support of the bill the author states:

California has long led the nation in embracing technological innovation, and autonomous vehicles are no exception. As this technology evolves, California must ensure drivers are informed and protected. SB 1315 prohibits automobile manufacturers from providing software updates that remove or restrict a driver's ability to manually operate their own vehicle. No Californian should lose the ability to drive their own car because of a silent software update.

The bill also requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to consider adding questions about autonomous driving systems to the driver's license examination, to ensure that future drivers understand their legal responsibilities and the limitations of these technologies.

SB 1315 does not impede autonomous vehicle adoption; rather, it establishes the consumer protections necessary for that adoption to proceed on a data-driven foundation.

Automated vehicle technology. Automated vehicles are cars that maintain some degree of self-control as prescribed by the Society of Automotive Engineers International's Taxonomy and Testing of Autonomous Vehicles Definitions for Terms Related to Driving Automation Systems for On-Road Motor Vehicles. Those definitions rate a car’s autonomy on a scale of one through five with terms of three or higher being deemed autonomous. Levels one and two represent driver assistance technology like lane maintenance assistance and collision avoidance systems.

To operate all of these complex systems, modern cars contain highly sophisticated computers. These computers operate a software suite to assist with the operation of a vehicle. In order to maintain the vehicle more automakers are now utilizing over-the-air software updates to ensure vehicles function and improve the software's ability. One concern is that the software update may introduce or delete features without the owner's knowledge. This is especially problematic if the updates add or remove some degree of automation without the owner's knowledge.

This bill. Prohibits auto manufacturers from providing or requiring software updates to vehicles that remove, disable, or materially restrict a driver's ability to manually engage or disengage an advanced autonomous driving system in a vehicle that was available at the time of the vehicle's original retail sale. For a more comprehensive review of how these updates occur and the damages they pose one should refer to the Committee on Transportation's analysis of this bill. (Assem. Com. on Trans., Analysis of Sen. Bill No. 1315 (2025-26 Reg. Session) as amended June 3, 2026.) This bill also tasks the Department of Motor Vehicles with considering updates to the driver's exam to test on automated vehicle technology. Finally, and of relevance to the jurisdiction of this Committee, the bill adopts a civil penalty for a violation of the software update provisions not to exceed \$25,000 per violation. These penalties can be sought by the Attorney General, a district attorney, or county counsel. The civil enforcement provisions generally mirror the preferred format for bills approved by this Committee and therefore do not need amendments.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

Concerns

Tesla Motors, Inc.

Analysis Prepared by: Nicholas Liedtke / JUD. / (916) 319-2334