

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1315 (Cabaldon) – As Amended June 24, 2026

Policy Committee:	Transportation	Vote:	15 - 0
	Judiciary		12 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the manufacturer of an advanced driver assistance system, or an automobile equipped with an advanced driver assistance system, 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 and specifies that failure to do is subject to a civil penalty of \$25,000 per violation.

The bill also authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), at the next regularly scheduled update of the driver's exam, to consider adding specific questions about driver assistance systems, the limitations of those systems and the obligation of a driver who uses those systems.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Minor costs to the DMV.
- 2) Potential court cost pressures of an unknown, but potentially significant amount (Trial Court Trust Fund (TCTF), General Fund (GF)). Although courts are not funded on a workload basis, increased workload creates pressure on the GF to backfill the TCTF. The Budget Act of 2025-26 included \$117.3 million GF to backfill the TCTF for trial court operations.

COMMENTS:

It is common to hear technologically advanced vehicles as "autonomous." This way of referring to such vehicles might be the result, at least in part, of the way manufacturers market such vehicles, using terms such as "autopilot" to describe some vehicle features.

In any case, state law distinguishes between an "advanced driver assistance system" and "autonomous technology." Like this bill, California statute defines an advanced driver assistance system by referencing Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) International's "Taxonomy and Definitions for Terms Related to Driving Automation Systems for On-Road Motor Vehicles, standard J3016 (APR2021)," which names such a system as "Level 2" and describes it as one in which automated systems controls both steering and speed, but the human driver must watch the road at all times. In contrast, state law defines an autonomous vehicle as one equipped with autonomous technology allowing increasingly less driver involvement, consistent with SAE's definitions of a Level 3, Level 4 or Level 5 vehicle.

Whatever one calls such advanced technology, the author wants to ensure a driver is able to turn off such a system and provides penalties that may be levied against a manufacturer that somehow prevents a driver from doing so. The author also suggests the DMV educate drivers about the different technologies available in today's vehicles, their capabilities and the responsibilities of drivers who may use them.

None seem to mind, as there is neither support for, nor opposition to, this bill. Tesla, however, expresses "concern" with the bill, as follows:

the bill limits a manufacturer's ability to offer products that enable a customer to choose to convert their traditional, manually driven vehicle to a SAE Level 4 or Level 5 fully autonomous vehicle by requiring that a driver is able to disable or disengage the autonomous technology. Inherently, this requirement presumes the presence of a human driver, which is counter to the nature of Level 4 and 5 systems, as they are designed to operate without any human intervention... we recommend the proposed changes...to mitigate these issues and simplify the intended obligation to allow customers to consent to autonomous technology in which manual operation was previously available.

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