

Date of Hearing: August 20, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 480 (Archuleta) – As Amended June 26, 2025

Policy Committee:	Transportation	Vote:	16 - 0
	Communications and Conveyance		9 - 0

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

SUMMARY:

This bill allows, effective January 1, 2026, an autonomous vehicle (AV) to be equipped with automated driving system (ADS) marker lamps and exempts such a lamp from existing requirements that regulate the color of any light emitted from an exterior vehicle lamp.

The bill specifies that any such lamp equipped on an AV be in accordance with SAE International's "Recommended Practice, Automated Driving System (ADS) Marker Lamp, standard J3134 (MAY2019)," as may be revised, and SAE International's "Chromaticity Requirements for Ground Vehicle Lamps and Lighting Equipment, standard J578 (APR2020)," as may be revised.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Negligible state costs, if any.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, "manufactures equipping their vehicles with autonomous driving systems should be allowed to install marker lamps on the outside of their vehicle to clearly communicate with pedestrians and law enforcement when a vehicle's automated driving system is activated," consistent with recommendations made by industry and federal regulators. The author contends doing so "will strengthen public safety and promote acceptance of automated driving systems."
- 2) **Background.** State law specifies, generally, that the color of lamps and reflected light from all reflectors visible from the front of a vehicle operated on the state's roads or highways be white or yellow. Similarly, state law specifies, generally, that the color of lamps and reflected light from all reflectors visible from the rear of a vehicle operated on the state's roads or highways be red.

California law also allows the operation of fully autonomous vehicles on its roadways for testing purposes. And, in some California cities, AVs provide commercial ride services.

Existing law requires an AV to have a visual marker inside the AV's cabin to indicate when the vehicle is in autonomous mode. And regulators have contemplated techniques that identify to other road users that a vehicle is operating autonomously. For example, California allows one car maker to test the use of turquoise lights on its AVs. However, at present, there is no standard to indicate that a vehicle is in autonomous mode, and, as described

above, California law limits the color of lamps and reflectors that may be used on the front or rear of a vehicle.

Writing in support of this bill, the Alliance for Automotive Innovation describes this bill as taking “the straightforward and important step of increasing safety on California roads by adopting the permissive use of the SAE ADS Marker Lamp lighting standards for the display activation of an automated-driving system and using a ‘Turquoise’ in-operation light.”

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