

April 12, 2017

The Honorable William Straus
Chairman – House of Representatives
Joint Committee on Transportation
General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

The Honorable Thomas McGee
Chairman – Senate
Joint Committee on Transportation
General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

SUBJECT: ADVANCED AUTOMATED VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY LEGISLATION

Dear Representative Straus and Senator McGee:

Global Automakers, www.globalautomakers.org, represents the U.S. operations of international motor vehicle manufacturers, original equipment suppliers, and other automotive-related trade associations. **In 2016, our members represented 56% of all new motor vehicles and 77% of green technology vehicles sold in Massachusetts.**

The Massachusetts Joint Committee on Transportation will be considering several pieces of legislation related to advanced automated vehicle technology. Global Automakers and our members work with legislators, industry leaders and other stakeholders to create public policy that save lives, improves motor vehicle safety, encourages technological innovation, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and protects our planet.

Our Position

Global Automakers **opposes** any legislation that **creates a patchwork of separate state laws establishing inconsistent design and performance criteria for automated vehicles.** We also **oppose** legislation that **erects barriers to testing and eventual deployment of this technology.** As evidenced by the numerous and varied proposals in Massachusetts, this concern is very real.

Senate Bill 1938 (Lesser) and House Bill 3422 (Ferrante), sometimes referred to as the “SAVE Act” are problematic for several reasons. First, **the legislation is unnecessarily restrictive,** as it limits who can test or operate an automated vehicle and limits the circumstances such vehicles can be tested and operated. For instance, it would prohibit testing except by automotive manufacturers. “Tier 1” suppliers that are making a significant contribution to automated vehicle innovation are excluded. In addition,

this bill expressly prohibits the testing, sale or use of automated vehicles that are not part of a manufacturer-driven SAVE project.

Second, **the legislation is anti-competitive**, as it prescribes a specific business model for the testing and operation of automated vehicles. This bill favors one business or ownership model over another; and by doing so will stifle innovation and potentially limit access to this technology in the future.

Finally, to the extent that these bills are intended to foster the development, testing and operation of autonomous vehicles in Massachusetts, it is unnecessary. **Testing is already taking place in Massachusetts.**

The various other proposals before the committee pose the same challenges to fostering development of this technology. **House Bill 1822 (Durant)** seeks to grant the Department of Transportation broad rulemaking authority to further regulate automated vehicles, including minimum safety standards for such vehicles. Motor vehicle safety and design requirements are the sole domain of the federal government. Individual state safety and design requirements will create a patchwork of laws that will inhibit the advancement of this technology. Such broad grants of rulemaking authority also create uncertainty for manufacturers and developers of this technology and will not make Massachusetts a leader on this issue.

House Bill 1829 (Farley-Bouvier), House Bill 3417 (Day), and Senate Bill 1945 (Lewis) pose serious obstacles to testing and deployment of automated vehicle technology. These proposals would require that automated vehicles also be zero emission vehicles (ZEV). Our members support state efforts to promote zero emission vehicles, but requiring all autonomous vehicles to be ZEVs is unnecessarily restrictive and could deny this life-saving technology to Massachusetts residents. These bills also raise serious concerns with proposals for broad rulemaking authority, data collection provisions, and safety and performance requirements for autonomous vehicles.

House Bill 2742 (Michlewitz) and House Bill 1897 (Straus) would also contribute to a patchwork of inconsistent state laws and impede development of autonomous vehicles. House Bill 2742 seeks to restrict interstate commerce. Proposals like these will not make Massachusetts a leader in automated vehicle technology development. The U.S. is currently the leader in development of automated vehicle technology. If Massachusetts and other states continue to pursue these restrictive policies we may lose our competitive advantage.

How Massachusetts Can Play a Role in Advancing Automated Vehicle Technology

In our view, the proposed legislation under consideration is unnecessary to promote the safe testing of automated vehicles in Massachusetts. Other states have refrained from enacting such laws, recognizing that complex rules and requirements could have unintended consequences. Ohio, for example, has demonstrated how to promote autonomous vehicle testing without the need to enact new laws or rules.

The city of Columbus was selected as the first “Smart City Challenge” grant recipient, becoming the first fully integrated connected transportation network in the nation. In addition, Governor Kasich has designated a stretch of US-33 as an innovation corridor and committed state resources to accelerate testing. Finally, Ohio established the “Smart Belt Coalition,” working across state borders to support research and development of automated and connected vehicle technology.

The automobile industry and policymakers, at all levels of government, must continue striving to identify sustainable long-term approaches to support the deployment of connected and automated technology in the future. To achieve these technology benefits, there must be close collaboration and coordination among government, industry, academia, and other stakeholders. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to the Joint Committee on Transportation and look forward to further engagement on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Damon Shelby Porter
Director
State Government Affairs