



February 3, 2022

Honorable Mike Petersen  
Chair, Senate Committee on Transportation  
300 SW 10th Ave  
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 379

Chair Petersen,

On behalf of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation (Auto Innovators), I thank you for the opportunity to express our opposition to SB 379. This legislation would establish automated vehicle (AV) policy that is inconsistent with the other neighboring states. If enacted, this policy would narrow the opportunities in a highly competitive and innovative automated vehicles industry.

Supporting more than 10 million auto-related jobs, the Auto Innovators membership includes not only vehicle manufacturers representing nearly 99 percent of all cars and light trucks sold in the U.S., but also Tier One suppliers, value chain partners, and technology companies. Because of our commitment to cleaner, safer, and smarter policies most of our manufacturing and automotive value chain members are leading the way on developing automated driving systems (ADS). SB 379 is largely inconsistent with other AV laws nationally. One main area of concern is SB 379's definitions and need for additional definitions. SAE International, the standard-setting body for the automotive industry, has an established set of terminology that is widely used by the automated vehicle community in the United States and internationally. These terms and definitions are present in the vast majority of AV legislation across the country, including neighboring states such as Nebraska, Iowa, and Arkansas. Auto Innovators advocates strongly for a federal law governing automated vehicles, in lieu of a state patchwork of laws, but if a state passes an AV policy it is important to provide continuity from one state to another. This will encourage competition domestically, which will help the U.S. keep up with other countries that are positioning themselves as global leaders on AVs.

According to data from NHTSA, there were 38,680 lives lost on United States roads in 2020 despite fewer people on the road. While cumulative numbers are not yet available, more than 20,000 lives had been lost in the first six months of 2021. ADS-equipped vehicles have the potential to drastically reduce vehicle crashes and save thousands of lives. And for millions of Americans who cannot drive, or do not, including the elderly and many people with disabilities, this technology represents the potential for unprecedented freedom and independence. For those unable to afford the cost of vehicle ownership or people who live in communities where owning a vehicle is not necessary, ridesharing applications have shown to expand access to new transportation and mobility options. Also, COVID-19 has shown the potential for contactless and driverless delivery applications. Consequently, there is a need to clear the path for higher levels of automated vehicles. SB 379, as written, would rule out the possibility of these automated driving possibilities.

Safety is the top priority for automakers and a primary goal for the development of ADS-equipped vehicles. Automakers take this responsibility very seriously and have invested billions as well as years

of development and research in technologies meant to reduce the frequency and severity of vehicle crashes. For instance, crash avoidance technologies such as automated emergency braking, lane-keeping assistance, blind spot monitoring, and forward collision warning are offered on many of our members' products today. ADS-equipped vehicles, known as SAE Level 3-5 vehicles, automate portions or all of the complete dynamic driving task (depending on level) and, have an even greater potential to reduce the number of traffic crashes on our nation's roadways. As drafted, SB 379 would not allow the full spectrum of ADS to operate in Kansas. These technologies are all intended to help address the number of crashes involving human error on our roadways, which the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates contributes to nearly all vehicle crashes on US highways.

Lastly, we appreciate the opportunity to express our concerns and opposition to SB 379 as drafted. As an alternative, Auto Innovators is ready to provide language that would position Kansas among the most technology-friendly states while providing consistency and a basic AV framework that is reflective of where the technology stands today. As a major job contributor to the Kansas economic engine, the Alliance for Automotive Innovation's members hope to continue to serve as a resource for the committee and sponsor as the state welcomes new innovative technologies. Thank for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leighton Yates". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Leighton Yates  
Director, State Affairs