

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1798

To prescribe standards for autonomous vehicles, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 15, 2025

Ms. LUMMIS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To prescribe standards for autonomous vehicles, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Autonomous Vehicle
5 Acceleration Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) rapid advancements in autonomous vehicle
9 technology present significant opportunities to im-
10 prove transportation safety, efficiency, and mobility;

1 (2) current Federal motor vehicle safety stand-
2 ards were not designed with fully autonomous vehi-
3 cles in mind, creating certification challenges and
4 slowing design and production of vehicles without
5 drivers;

6 (3) maintaining global leadership in autono-
7 mous vehicle technology will enhance the competi-
8 tiveness of the United States, foster economic
9 growth, and spur innovation across the domestic
10 manufacturing sector; and

11 (4) the most advanced automated driving sys-
12 tems have demonstrated safety records superior to
13 human drivers in comparable situations, indicating
14 that maintaining regulatory frameworks designed ex-
15 clusively for human operators may delay lifesaving
16 technological implementation.

17 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

18 In this Act:

19 (1) **AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE.**—

20 (A) **IN GENERAL.**—The term “autonomous
21 vehicle” means a vehicle equipped with an auto-
22 mated driving system that is capable of per-
23 forming the entire dynamic driving task on a
24 sustained basis without any expected involve-
25 ment by a human driver.

1 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “autonomous
2 vehicle” includes a vehicle equipped with a
3 Level 4 or Level 5 automated driving system.

4 (2) FMVSS.—The term “FMVSS” means a
5 Federal motor vehicle safety standard prescribed
6 under section 30111(a) of title 49, United States
7 Code.

8 (3) SAE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD J3016.—
9 The term “SAE International Standard J3016”
10 means SAE International Recommended Practice
11 entitled “Taxonomy and Definitions for Terms Re-
12 lated to Driving Automation Systems for On-Road
13 Motor Vehicles”, numbered J3016, and dated April
14 2021 (or a successor standard adopted by the Sec-
15 retary).

16 (4) SAE TERMS.—The terms “automated driv-
17 ing system”, “Level 4”, and “Level 5” have the
18 meanings given those terms in SAE International
19 Standard J3016.

20 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
21 the Secretary of Transportation, acting through the
22 Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safe-
23 ty Administration.

24 (6) VOLPE 2016 REPORT.—The term “Volpe
25 2016 Report” means the report of the John A.

1 Volpe National Transportation Systems Center of
2 the Department of Transportation entitled “Review
3 of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards
4 (FMVSS) for Automated Vehicles: Identifying Po-
5 tential Barriers and Challenges for the Certification
6 of Automated Vehicles Using Existing FMVSS” and
7 dated March 2016.

8 **SEC. 4. IMPLEMENTATION OF VOLPE CENTER REC-**
9 **COMMENDATIONS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
11 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall address,
12 in accordance with subsection (b), all certification chal-
13 lenges identified by the Volpe Center 2016 Report relating
14 to—

- 15 (1) the presumption of a human driver; and
16 (2) performance specifications, test procedures,
17 or equipment requirements that do not adequately
18 account for autonomous vehicle designs.

19 (b) REGULATORY UPDATES.—The Secretary shall, as
20 the Secretary determines appropriate, develop, amend, in-
21 terpret, exempt from application, or otherwise update any
22 FMVSS requirement or other regulation, guidance, or in-
23 terpretation under the jurisdiction of the Secretary to en-
24 sure that the certification and approval process for Level
25 4 and Level 5 autonomous vehicles is not unduly ob-

1 structured by assumptions of traditional human-driver de-
2 signs, including requirements relating to seating arrange-
3 ments, internal cabin configurations, window placement,
4 driver controls, and other features, as determined by the
5 Secretary.

6 (c) DISCRETIONARY COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION
7 AND RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.—At the discretion of the
8 Secretary, and through such rulemaking as the Secretary
9 determines to be necessary, including by establishing ex-
10 emption processes for autonomous vehicles consistent with
11 section 30114(a) of title 49, United States Code, auto-
12 nous vehicles may be determined to be in compliance with
13 applicable regulations relating to motor vehicle safety, in-
14 cluding any FMVSS.

15 (d) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
16 described in subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to
17 the appropriate committees of Congress a report detailing
18 steps taken by the Secretary under subsection (b) to ad-
19 dress the challenges identified by the Volpe Center 2016
20 described in subsection (a), including any new or revised
21 rules or guidance issued by the Secretary.

22 **SEC. 5. ROADMAP FOR FUTURE CONCEPTS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
24 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop

1 a roadmap to achieve commercial-scale deployment of
2 Level 4 and Level 5 autonomous vehicles.

3 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—The roadmap required under
4 subsection (a) shall—

5 (1) support the design, manufacturing, and de-
6 ployment of Level 4 and Level 5 autonomous vehi-
7 cles in the United States;

8 (2) promote United States leadership in global
9 autonomous vehicle markets and supply chains;

10 (3) identify ways to lower practical, techno-
11 logical, and regulatory barriers to Level 4 and Level
12 5 autonomous vehicle deployment;

13 (4) recommend a risk hierarchy involving the
14 use of autonomous vehicles and a standard of safety
15 for autonomous vehicle use;

16 (5) incorporate a supplemental technology as-
17 sessment, which shall—

18 (A) identify and address—

19 (i) new technologies and industry de-
20 velopments since publication of the Volpe
21 2016 Report;

22 (ii) emerging safety concerns specific
23 to autonomous vehicle operations; and

1 (iii) recommended updates to the find-
2 ings or recommendations of the Volpe
3 2016 Report; and

4 (B) on completion, be used by the Sec-
5 retary to propose any amendments to any exist-
6 ing FMVSS that are necessary to ensure clar-
7 ity, consistency, and safety for autonomous-ve-
8 hicle designs; and

9 (6) include any additional initiatives or strate-
10 gies the Secretary determines necessary to achieve
11 the objectives of this Act.

12 (c) SUPPLEMENTAL TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT IN-
13 TERIM UPDATE.—Not later than 180 days after the date
14 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to
15 the appropriate committees of Congress a preliminary up-
16 date describing progress, challenges, and next steps taken
17 by the Secretary to carry out the supplemental technology
18 assessment described in subsection (b)(5).

19 (d) ROADMAP UPDATES.—The roadmap required
20 under subsection (a) shall be updated periodically, as de-
21 termined necessary by the Secretary.

22 (e) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the ap-
23 propriate committees of Congress, and make publicly
24 available, the roadmap required under subsection (a).

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