



March 10, 2022

The Honorable Tim Hennessey
Chairman, House Transportation
313 Main Capitol Building
P.O. Box 202026
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2026

The Honorable Mike Carroll
Chairman, House Transportation
300 Main Capitol Building
P.O. Box 202118
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2018

RE: House Bill 2398 - Highly Automated Vehicles Deployment

Dear Chairmen,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association (PMTA), I am writing in **support of House Bill 2398**, which was referred to the House Transportation Committee on March 10, 2022.

House Bill 2398 (Oberlander-R) amends Title 75 (Vehicles) to authorize the testing and deployment of highly automated vehicles (HAVs). Specifically, it provides a roadmap to evaluate and commercially deploy HAVs at a Level 3, 4, or 5 on State and Local highways, including roadways, trafficways, and streets.

Prominent Pennsylvania-based educational institutions, sophisticated HAV companies, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), etc., have been safely managing the testing of HAVs with a driver, most notably since 2018 when PennDOT implemented voluntary guidance.ⁱ

Testing and commercial deployment of HAVs are being advanced in 39 States,ⁱⁱ including Arizona, California, Florida, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, Wisconsin, etc. To efficiently design the Automated Driving Systems (ADS) and effectively compete in the global marketplace, House Bill 2398 mirrors Ohio and Michigan, part of the Smart Belt Coalition,ⁱⁱⁱ which is a collaboration of academia, State Departments of Transportation, and the Federal Government.

A recent Pittsburgh-based study^{iv} predicts that the HAV sector will grow to a \$1 trillion+ global market by the end of the decade, with an estimated 5,000 new jobs and a \$10 billion impact for Southwestern Pennsylvania if it captures only 1 percent of that global market growth. Further, there is a nationwide truck driver shortage – estimated at 80,000 drivers – straining the supply chain. Autonomous truck operations will help address this growing shortfall by allowing the industry to explore innovative solutions that use its drivers more effectively.

Currently, the Vehicle Code requires a natural person to drive or be in actual physical control of the vehicle. The adoption of House Bill 2398 is necessary to permit an HAV to operate without a natural person, while still maintaining pedestrian, occupant, and overall traffic safety.

Specifically, it also amends 75 § 3317 (Platooning) to say that the lead vehicle may operate with a driver and one nonlead vehicle may operate with an automated driving system (ADS) engaged, with a highly automated vehicle driver or without a highly automated vehicle driver. It further removes the approval by PennDOT of the plan for general platooning operations but requires the person operating the platoon to file and review a plan for general operations with PennDOT, in consultation with the PA State Police and the PA Turnpike Commission, as applicable.

In conclusion, this legislation will ensure that Pennsylvania is positioned on the cutting edge in the promising field of highly automated vehicles. In the trucking sector, the legislation will allow the industry to take advantage of significant efficiencies that help move critical supplies and commodities safely and responsibly.

PMTA respectfully requests your support for this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Oyler
President & CEO
Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association
royler@pmta.org

BCC: House Transportation Committee

ⁱ Automated Vehicle Testing Guidance, PUB 950 (9-20)

https://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/ResearchandTesting/Autonomous%20Vehicles/Documents/PUB_950_9-20.pdf

ⁱⁱ Autonomous Vehicles – Self-Driving Vehicles Enacted Legislation, 2/18/2020

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/autonomous-vehicles-self-driving-vehicles-enacted-legislation.aspx>

ⁱⁱⁱ Smart Belt Coalition, A Regional Connected and Automated Vehicle Collaborative, 9/12/2017

https://www.ibtta.org/sites/default/files/documents/2017/Atlanta/Cole_Shuey.pdf

^{iv} Forefront: Securing Pittsburgh's Break-out Position in Autonomous Mobile Systems, September 2021

<https://ridc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PGH-Autonomous-Systems-Full-Report-1.pdf>