

HOUSE No. 1897

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

William M. Straus

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to autonomous vehicles.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

William M. Straus

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

10th Bristol

HOUSE No. 1897

By Mr. Straus of Mattapoisett, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1897) of William M. Straus relative to autonomous vehicles. Transportation.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act relative to autonomous vehicles.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to regulate autonomous vehicles, therefore, it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public safety.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 90 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting after section 19L the following new section:-

3 Section 19M. As used in this section the following words shall, unless the context
4 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:--

5 “Autonomous mode,” active operation of a motor vehicle through the use of
6 autonomous technology without the active control or monitoring of a human operator.

7 "Autonomous technology," technology installed on a motor vehicle that has the
8 capability to drive the vehicle on which the technology is installed without the active control or
9 monitoring by a human operator. The term excludes a motor vehicle enabled with active safety
10 systems or driver assistance systems, including, without limitation, a system to provide

11 electronic blind spot assistance, crash avoidance, emergency braking, parking assistance,
12 adaptive cruise control, lane keep assistance, lane departure warning, or traffic jam and queuing
13 assistant, or any system or equipment designed to enhance the safe operation of the vehicle by a
14 human operator, unless any such system alone or in combination with other systems enables the
15 vehicle on which the technology is installed to drive without the active control or monitoring by
16 a human operator.

17 “Autonomous Vehicle,” any vehicle equipped with autonomous technology.

18 (a) An autonomous vehicle registered in this state must continue to meet all federal
19 standards and regulations for motor vehicles. The vehicle shall:

20 (1) have a means to engage and disengage the autonomous technology which is easily
21 accessible to the operator;

22 (2) have a means, inside the vehicle, to visually indicate when the vehicle is operating in
23 autonomous mode;

24 (3) have a means to alert the operator of the vehicle if a technology failure affecting the
25 ability of the vehicle to safely operate autonomously is detected while the vehicle is operating
26 autonomously in order to indicate to the operator to take control of the vehicle, and, if the
27 operator fails to assume control of the vehicle, to cause the vehicle to come to a complete stop;
28 and

29 (4) be capable of being operated in compliance with the applicable traffic and motor
30 vehicle laws of this state.

31 (b) Federal regulations promulgated by the National Highway Traffic Safety
32 Administration shall supersede this section when found to be in conflict with this section.

33 (c) Vehicles equipped with autonomous technology may be operated in autonomous
34 mode on public roads in this state by employees, contractors, or other persons designated by
35 manufacturers of autonomous technology who have received a certificate from the department
36 certifying that the vehicle conforms to the requirements of subsection (a) for the purpose of
37 testing the technology. For testing purposes, a human operator shall be present in the
38 autonomous vehicle such that he or she has the ability to monitor the vehicle's performance and
39 intervene, if necessary, unless the vehicle is being tested or demonstrated on a closed course.
40 Prior to the start of testing in this state, the entity performing the testing must submit to the
41 department an instrument of insurance, surety bond, or proof of self-insurance acceptable to the
42 department in the amount of \$5,000,000.

43 (d) The original manufacturer of a vehicle converted by a third party into an
44 autonomous vehicle shall not be liable in, and shall have a defense to and be dismissed from, any
45 legal action brought against the original manufacturer by any person injured due to an alleged
46 vehicle defect caused by the conversion of the vehicle, or by equipment installed by the
47 converter, unless the alleged defect was present in the vehicle as originally manufactured.

48 (e) Not later than June 30, 2017, the department shall submit a report to the president
49 of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives, the senate and house chairs of the
50 joint committee on transportation, and the clerks of the senate and house of representatives
51 recommending additional legislative or regulatory action that may be required for the safe testing
52 and operation of motor vehicles equipped with autonomous technology.