



AB 1592: Advancing the Testing of Autonomous Vehicles

Summary:

AB 1592 will authorize the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) to conduct a pilot project for the testing of electric, low-speed, multi-passenger autonomous vehicles.

Background:

With the advent of autonomous vehicles and the rapid development of autonomous technologies and connected vehicle applications, California is on the cusp of transforming everyday transportation, increasing road safety and improving mobility.

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) is a public agency which is spearheading the testing and development of autonomous and connected vehicle technologies in Northern California.

As a regional leader in transportation, CCTA developed GoMentum Station at the 5,000 acre, former United States Navy weapons station in Concord, CA, where the convergence of automobile manufacturers, communications companies, technology companies, researchers and public agencies are testing next generation transportation technologies that will redefine mobility.

Need for legislation:

In 2012, Senate Bill 1298 was signed into law, authorizing the operation of autonomous vehicles on public roads for testing purposes. This bill required the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to adopt regulations for the operation of autonomous vehicles on public roads, including any testing, equipment, performance, and insurance standards no later than January 1, 2015.

In September 2014, DMV enacted regulations setting forth the requirements for testing autonomous vehicles, but they are still drafting the final set of regulations for the full deployment of autonomous vehicles for public operation.

CCTA currently hosts autonomous vehicle testing at GoMentum Station because it is a private, secure facility located within the Concord Naval Weapons Station. CCTA is planning to expand their testing program, but current law does not authorize the operation of autonomous vehicles without a steering wheel, brake pedal, accelerator, and operator on public roads, even if they intersect private property.

AB 1592 authorizes CCTA to continue to cultivate safe, convenient, innovative, complementary and alternative modes of transportation at GoMentum Station and a private business park within Contra Costa County, designated by CCTA.

For California to remain on the cutting edge of transportation technology and a potential hotbed for investment, development, and new jobs, it is imperative that the State continues to support the growth of testing programs that advance autonomous vehicle technology.

This bill:

Specifically, this bill:

- Authorizes CCTA to conduct a pilot project for the testing of autonomous vehicles not equipped with a steering wheel, brake pedal, accelerator or operator.
- The autonomous vehicle shall operate at speeds less than 35 miles per hour.
- Testing shall be conducted only at GoMentum Station at the former Concord Naval Weapons Station and a privately owned business park designated by CCTA, including any public roads intersecting the designated property.

Support:

- Contra Costa Transportation Authority (Sponsor)

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