



A bold voice for transportation workers

May 12, 2021

Transportation Labor Opposes Anti-Worker, Anti-Safety Automated Vehicles Proposal

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) and our 33 affiliated unions, who together represent millions of workers across all sectors of the transportation industry, I urge you to oppose Senator Thune's automated vehicles (AV) amendment to the Endless Frontier Act if he requests a vote in today's committee markup.

Congress has a responsibility to ensure AVs are properly regulated before we open the floodgates to widespread deployment as the Thune amendment would permit. Their safety record and their potential to displace millions of good American jobs demands additional hearings, careful consideration of necessary safety measures, and a clear and forceful legislative response. The Thune amendment is being offered under the guise of enhancing safety and increasing American competitiveness, but the reality is, it does neither. Instead, it skirts federal responsibility and is little more than a handout to the AV industry, with no path to grow good jobs for Americans and no clear vision for dealing with workforce challenges and significant safety threats.

The Thune legislation as proposed does not offer a real plan for achieving safety objectives. Instead, it simply trusts that the manufacturers will get it right, despite hundreds of public accounts of partially automated vehicles crashing, often resulting in fatalities. The US Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have a responsibility to provide strict oversight of and establish enforceable standards for automated driving systems deployed on our streets. Americans deserve better than a continuation of [President Trump's AV policies](#), which took a back seat in protecting the public by relying on waivers and exemptions from safety regulations and voluntary safety self-assessments—an approach that the NTSB condemned after the [Uber crash in Arizona](#).

Senator Thune's proposal also fails to offer a single workforce provision designed to mitigate projected job losses and changes to jobs from automation. And it fails to offer protections for workers including training and transition assistance in the commercial and public transit sectors. TTD has long called on Congress to make a workforce title the foundation of any AV legislation. The Thune proposal would leave frontline employees to fend for themselves. Failing

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Greg Regan, President / Shari Semelsberger, Secretary-Treasurer



to include a workforce title would be a serious misstep as history tells us that strong unions, collective bargaining, and worker engagement are essential to mitigating harm to good jobs inherent in rapid, technology-enabled changes to industries.

Regarding manufacturing, the amendment offers no labor standards to ensure that U.S. assistance to manufacturers through the “Highly Automated Systems Safety Center of Excellence” will produce good middle-class manufacturing jobs. In fact, there are no guarantees that the technology developed within or in partnership with the center must be manufactured in the U.S. This would be a missed opportunity to expand American manufacturing and boost domestic job creation.

TTD welcomes the opportunity to work with the Commerce Committee on the future of AVs in our transportation system. But rushing through an amendment that advances the AV industry’s interests but ignores workers and the government’s safety responsibilities over emerging AV technologies is the wrong path forward. **For these reasons, we firmly urge you to oppose Senator Thune’s amendment.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Regan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Regan
President