STATE OF NEW YORK

10473

IN SENATE

May 15, 2026

Introduced by Sen. FAHY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Transportation

AN ACT to amend the vehicle and traffic law, in relation to fully autonomous vehicles; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The vehicle and traffic law is amended by adding a new title 11-A to read as follows:

TITLE 11-A
FULLY AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

ARTICLE 48-D
FULLY AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE DRIVING

Section 2500. Definitions.
2501. Operation of fully autonomous vehicles without a human driver.
2502. Licensing.
2503. Insurance.
2504. Duties following crashes involving fully autonomous vehicles.
2505. On-demand autonomous vehicle network.
2506. Registration and title.
2507. Controlling authority.
2508. Operation of a motor vehicle with an automated driving system by a human driver.

§ 2500. Definitions. For purposes of this article the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1. "Automated driving system" shall mean the hardware and software that are collectively capable of performing the entire dynamic driving task on a sustained basis, regardless of whether it is limited to a specific operational design domain.

2. "Dynamic driving task or DDT" shall mean all of the real-time operational and tactical functions required to operate a vehicle in on-road

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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traffic, excluding the strategic functions such as trip scheduling and selection of destinations and waypoints, and including without limitation: lateral vehicle motion control via steering, longitudinal motion control via acceleration and deceleration, monitoring the driving environment via object and event detection, recognition, classification, and response preparation, object and event response execution, maneuver planning; and enhancing conspicuity via lighting, signaling, and gesturing.

3. "DDT Fallback" shall mean the response by the person or human driver to either perform the DDT or achieve a minimal risk condition after occurrence of a DDT performance-relevant system failure or failures or upon operational design domain exit, or the response by an automated driving system to achieve minimal risk condition, given the same circumstances.

4. "Fully autonomous vehicle" shall mean a motor vehicle:

(a) with a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating of ten thousand pounds or less;

(b) equipped with an automated driving system designed to function without a human driver and where lateral vehicle motion control via steering, longitudinal motion control via acceleration and deceleration, are automatically controlled; and

(c) equipped with two or more distinct sensing modalities that can detect and track obstacles in the event of failure of the camera system so that the automated driving system can continue to avoid obstacles while bringing the vehicle to a minimal risk condition.

5. "Human driver" shall mean a natural person in a motor vehicle with a valid license to operate a motor vehicle who controls all or part of the dynamic driving task.

6. "Minimal risk condition" shall mean a condition to which a person, human driver, or an automated driving system may bring a motor vehicle after performing the DDT Fallback in order to reduce the risk of a crash when a given trip cannot or should not be completed.

7. "On-demand autonomous vehicle network" shall mean a TNC, as defined by section sixteen hundred ninety-one of this chapter, that uses a software application or other digital means to dispatch or otherwise enable the pre-arrangement of transportation with fully autonomous vehicles for purposes of transporting passengers or goods, including for-hire transportation and transportation of passengers or goods for compensation.

8. "Operational design domain" shall mean operating conditions under which a given automated driving system is specifically designed to function, including, but not limited to, environmental, geographical, and time-of-day restrictions, and/or the requisite presence or absence of certain traffic or roadway characteristics.

9. "Person" shall mean a natural person, corporation, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, limited liability company, association, joint venture, governmental agency, public corporation, or any other legal or commercial entity.

10. "Request to intervene" shall mean notification by an automated driving system to a human driver, directing such human driver to promptly begin or resume performance of part or all of the dynamic driving task.

§ 2501. Operation of fully autonomous vehicles without a human driver. 1. A person may operate a fully autonomous vehicle on the public roads in the counties of Albany and Rensselaer without a human driver provided that the automated driving system is engaged and the vehicle meets the following conditions:

(a) if a failure of the automated driving system occurs that renders such system unable to perform the entire dynamic driving task relevant to its intended operational design domain, the fully autonomous vehicle shall achieve a minimal risk condition;

(b) the fully autonomous vehicle is capable of operating in compliance with the applicable traffic and motor vehicle safety laws and regulations of this state when reasonable to do so, unless an exemption has been granted by the department; and

(c) when required by federal law, the vehicle bears the required manufacturer's certification label indicating that at the time of its manufacture it has been certified to be in compliance with all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, including reference to any exemption granted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

2. Prior to operating a fully autonomous vehicle on the public roads in the counties of Albany and Rensselaer without a human driver, a person shall submit a law enforcement interaction plan to the department which shall describe:

(a) the means of communicating with a fleet support specialist who is available during the times such fully autonomous vehicle is in operation;

(b) the means of safely removing such fully autonomous vehicle from the roadway and steps to safely tow such fully autonomous vehicle;

(c) the means to recognize whether or not such automated driving system for such fully autonomous vehicle is engaged; and

(d) any additional information the manufacturer or owner deems necessary regarding the hazardous conditions or public safety risks associated with the operation of such fully autonomous vehicle.

3. (a) The owner of a fully autonomous vehicle operating without a human driver shall be liable for any violations of applicable traffic and motor vehicle safety laws and regulations of this state made by such vehicle when the automated driving system is engaged.

(b) (i) A notice of liability shall be sent by first class mail to each owner alleged to be liable for a violation by an autonomous vehicle operating without a human driver. Personal delivery on the owner shall not be required. A manual or automatic record of mailing prepared in the ordinary course of business shall be prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein.

(ii) A notice of liability shall contain the name and address of the owner alleged to be liable for a violation by an autonomous vehicle operating without a human driver, the registration number of the vehicle involved in such violation, the location where such violation took place, the date and time of such violation and the identification number of the police officer who observed such violation.

(iii) The notice of liability shall contain information advising the owner charged of the manner and the time in which such person may contest the liability alleged in the notice.

(iv) The notice of liability shall be prepared and mailed by the municipality having jurisdiction over the intersection where the violation occurred, or by any other entity authorized by such municipality to prepare and mail such notification of violation.

§ 2502. Licensing. Notwithstanding the provisions of article nineteen of this chapter, when an automated driving system installed on a motor vehicle is engaged:

1. The automated driving system shall be considered the driver or operator, for the purpose of assessing compliance with applicable traffic or motor vehicle laws and shall be deemed to satisfy electronically

all physical acts required by a driver or operator of such motor vehicle; and

2. The automated driving system shall be considered to be licensed to operate such motor vehicle.

§ 2503. Insurance. Before operating a fully autonomous vehicle on public roads in this state, a person shall submit proof of financial responsibility satisfactory to the department that such fully autonomous vehicle is covered by insurance or proof of self-insurance that satisfies the requirements of article six of this chapter.

§ 2504. Duties following crashes involving fully autonomous vehicles. In the event of a crash involving a fully autonomous vehicle:

1. Such fully autonomous vehicle shall remain on the scene of such crash when required by article twenty-two of this chapter; and

2. The owner of such fully autonomous vehicle, or a person on behalf of such fully autonomous vehicle's owner, shall promptly report any crashes or collisions consistent with article twenty-two of this chapter.

§ 2505. On-demand autonomous vehicle network. An on-demand autonomous vehicle network shall be permitted to operate pursuant to state laws governing the operation of transportation network companies, as defined by section sixteen hundred ninety-one of this chapter, taxis, or any other ground transportation for-hire of passengers, with the exception that any provision of article forty-four-B of this chapter that reasonably applies only to a human driver shall not apply to the operation of fully autonomous vehicles with the automated driving system engaged on an on-demand autonomous vehicle network.

§ 2506. Registration and title. 1. A fully autonomous vehicle shall be properly registered in accordance with title four of this chapter and such fully autonomous vehicle shall be identified on the registration as a fully autonomous vehicle.

2. A fully autonomous vehicle shall be properly titled in accordance with article forty-six of this chapter and such fully autonomous vehicle shall be identified on the title as a fully autonomous vehicle.

§ 2507. Controlling authority. Notwithstanding any law, rule or regulation to the contrary:

1. Unless otherwise provided in this chapter and notwithstanding any other provision of law, fully autonomous vehicles and automated driving systems shall be governed exclusively by this article. The department shall be the sole and exclusive state agency that may implement the provisions of this article;

2. Fully autonomous vehicles and automated driving systems operating pursuant to this article shall not be subject to section twelve hundred twenty-six of this chapter; and

3. No state agency, political subdivision, municipality, or local entity may enact or keep in force rules or ordinances that would impose taxes, fees, or other requirements including performance standards, specific to the operation of fully autonomous vehicles, automated driving systems, or on-demand autonomous vehicle networks in addition to the requirements of this article.

§ 2508. Operation of a motor vehicle with an automated driving system by a human driver. 1. A person may operate a motor vehicle equipped with an automated driving system capable of performing the entire dynamic driving task if:

(a) such automated driving system is designed to issue a request to intervene whenever the automated driving system is not capable of

performing the entire dynamic driving task with the expectation that such person will respond appropriately to such a request; and

(b) the automated driving system is capable of being operated in compliance with title seven of this chapter when reasonable to do so unless an exemption has been granted by the department.

2. Nothing in this article shall prohibit or restrict a human driver from operating a fully autonomous vehicle equipped with controls that allow for such human driver to control all or part of the dynamic driving task.

§ 2. The vehicle and traffic law is amended by adding a new section 383-a to read as follows:

§ 383-a. Equipment required for certain automated motor vehicles. 1. For purposes of this section, the terms "fully autonomous vehicle", "automated driving system", and "human driver" shall have the same meanings as defined by section twenty-five hundred of this chapter.

2. A fully autonomous vehicle that is designed to be operated exclusively by an automated driving system for all trips shall not be subject to motor vehicle equipment laws or regulations of this state which (a) relate to or support motor vehicle operation by a human driver; and (b) are not relevant for an automated driving system.

§ 3. The vehicle and traffic law is amended by adding a new section 301-c to read as follows:

§ 301-c. Inspection criteria for fully autonomous vehicles. Section three hundred one of this article and any regulations promulgated by the commissioner therewith shall only apply to a fully autonomous vehicle, as defined by section twenty-five hundred of this chapter, in a manner consistent with the provisions of section three hundred eighty-three-a of this title.

§ 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire July 1, 2028 when upon such date the provisions of this act shall be deemed repealed.