

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 1207 Autonomous Vehicle Technology

SPONSOR(S): Brandes

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Transportation & Highway Safety Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N	Johnson	Kruse
2) Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee	14 Y, 0 N	Rayman	Davis
3) Economic Affairs Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Florida law does not address the use of autonomous vehicles. Autonomous vehicles are driverless cars that can, in some ways, fulfill human transportation needs.

HB 1207 defines autonomous technology and provides that vehicles equipped with autonomous technology may be operated on roads by employees or contractors of manufacturers for the purpose of testing the technology. The bill requires the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to prepare a report relating to the safe operation of vehicles equipped with autonomous technology on public roads, which is required to contain recommended legislative action and proposed DHSMV rules.

The bill has an insignificant fiscal impact on the state.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2012.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Current Situation

Autonomous vehicles are driverless cars that are able to fulfill human transportation needs.¹ While they are not in widespread use, they can provide several distinct advantages including reduced fuel consumption, not requiring anyone behind the wheel so cars could be shared, and the need for fewer parking spaces.²

The only jurisdiction in the world where it is legal to operate autonomous vehicles on public roads is in the state of Nevada, where a law authorizing them passed in June 2011.³

Proposed Changes

The bill defines “autonomous technology” as “technology installed on a vehicle enabling it to operate without the active control and continuous monitoring of a human operator. The term does not include individual safety systems or driver assistance systems such as electronic blind spot assistance, crash avoidance and emergency breaking systems, park assist, adaptive cruise control, lane keep assist, lane departure warning, or traffic jam and queuing assistant, unless any such system alone or in combination with other systems enables the vehicle to drive itself without the active control or continuous monitoring of a human operator.”

The bill provides that vehicles equipped with autonomous technology may be operated on roads in this state by employees or contractors of manufacturers for the purpose of testing the technology. For testing purposes, the vehicle may operate without the active control of a human operator, but the operation of the test vehicle must be continuously monitored in a manner that allows active control over the vehicle to be immediately assumed by a human operator.

The bill requires the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to prepare a report relating to the safe operation of vehicles equipped with autonomous technology on public roads. The report is required to contain recommended legislative action and proposed DHSMV rules to:

- Establish a driver license endorsement to be required for a resident to operate a vehicle with autonomous technology.
- Establish rules of the road and other safety requirements for a vehicle with autonomous technology operating with or without the physical presence of a driver.
- Require each manufacturer of autonomous technology or any vehicle with autonomous technology to certify that such technology conforms to all safety standards established by DHSMV.
- Permit the safe testing of autonomous technology on public roads prior to the manufacturer’s certification that such technology conforms to all safety requirements established by DHSMV.

The report must be submitted to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by February 1, 2014.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

¹ A video of an autonomous vehicle is available at http://www.ted.com/talks/sebastian_thrun_google_s_driverless_car.html (Last visited January 17, 2011).

² *Google Cars Drive Themselves, in Traffic*, New York Times, October 9, 2010.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/10/science/10google.html> (Last visited January 18, 2010).

³ Nevada Assembly Bill 511.

Section 1. Defines "autonomous technology", authorizes testing of autonomous vehicles, and requires the DHSMV to issue a report on vehicles equipped with autonomous technology.

Section 2 Provides an effective date of July 1, 2012.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

Insignificant impact. There are costs associated with provisions in the bill for DHSMV to prepare a report that will be covered within existing resources.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not Applicable. This bill does not appear to affect county or municipal governments.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill requires DHSMV to submit proposed rules relating to vehicles with autonomous technology with its report.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

None.