

By: Gonzales

H.B. No. 3690

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the operation of autonomous motor vehicles by the Texas Department of Transportation.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 472, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Subchapter E to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER E. DEPARTMENT SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Sec. 472.041. DEPARTMENT USE OF AUTONOMOUS MOTOR VEHICLES.

(a) In this section:

(1) "Autonomous motor vehicle" means a self-propelled vehicle or piece of equipment that uses autonomous technology to operate itself without the active control or continuous monitoring of a person.

(2) "Autonomous technology" means technology that enables a vehicle or piece of equipment to operate without the active control or continuous monitoring of a person. The term does not include, except to the extent that such a system may be a component of autonomous technology, an individual safety system or a driver assistance system that enhances safety or provides driver assistance but is not individually capable of operating a motor vehicle or piece of equipment without the active control or continuous monitoring of a person.

(3) "Passenger vehicle" has the meaning assigned by Section 545.412.

1 (b) An operator of an autonomous motor vehicle operating
2 with autonomous technology is:

3 (1) a person who causes the vehicle's autonomous
4 technology to engage, regardless of whether the person is in the
5 autonomous motor vehicle while the vehicle is operating; or

6 (2) a person who is seated in the driver's seat of the
7 autonomous motor vehicle and continuously monitors the operation of
8 the autonomous motor vehicle.

9 (c) The commission by order may authorize the department to
10 operate an autonomous motor vehicle on the state highway system to
11 perform construction and maintenance work for the department if:

12 (1) the commission determines that the use of the
13 autonomous motor vehicle will increase the efficiency of
14 construction and maintenance projects and improve the safety of
15 department employees and the public;

16 (2) the manufacturer of that type of autonomous motor
17 vehicle has certified that:

18 (A) the autonomous technology of the autonomous
19 motor vehicle:

20 (i) complies with state and federal
21 standards and regulations for motor vehicles; and

22 (ii) does not impede the operation of a
23 feature of a motor vehicle that is required for the motor vehicle to
24 comply with:

25 (a) state and federal standards and
26 regulations for motor vehicles; or

27 (b) federal motor vehicle safety

1 standards for the model year of the motor vehicle, if the motor
2 vehicle is a passenger vehicle;

3 (B) the manufacturer has tested the autonomous
4 motor vehicle on public roadways; and

5 (C) the manufacturer has established financial
6 responsibility in a manner accepted under Section 601.051 in an
7 amount of at least \$5 million;

8 (3) the autonomous motor vehicle includes a fail-safe
9 system where:

10 (A) an indicator alerts the operator to a failure
11 of the autonomous technology that may affect the motor vehicle's
12 ability to operate autonomously; and

13 (B) when the indicator is activated:

14 (i) the motor vehicle may be manually
15 controlled by the operator; or

16 (ii) the motor vehicle stops;

17 (4) the autonomous motor vehicle includes an indicator
18 that indicates whether the vehicle's autonomous technology is
19 turned on or off; and

20 (5) the autonomous motor vehicle allows the operator
21 to assume active control over the motor vehicle, including by using
22 the brakes, accelerator pedal, and steering wheel.

23 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.