



January 24, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Assembly Member Carl Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins
President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader
188 State Street
Legislative Office Building, Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Governor Hochul, President Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie, and Honorable Members of the Legislature:

The Autonomous Vehicle Industry Association (“AVIA”) writes to express strong support for Part J (S8308/A8808), which would extend New York’s existing AV testing pilot program to 2026. We appreciate the opportunity to engage with lawmakers to express our support for extending the AV testing pilot program, as such extension is necessary for continued AV operations in the State.

By way of background, AVIA is comprised of the world’s leading technology, ridesharing, trucking, and automotive companies. Our mission is to realize the benefits of autonomous vehicles (*i.e.*, SAE Levels 4 and 5-capable vehicles) and support the safe and expeditious deployment of these technologies.

New Yorkers stand to experience the many benefits of AVs as the technology receives increased support in the State. As you may know, AVs offer tremendous safety, mobility, and efficiency benefits, holding the potential both to save lives and to change the way we move. Last month, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (“NHTSA”) reported that nearly 32,000 Americans died on our roads in the first nine months of 2022. To put those deaths in context, that is roughly equivalent to a plane crash *every day* in our country. In New York specifically, NHTSA reported that initial data for 2022 revealed a 3.8% increase in traffic



fatalities.¹ However, AVs are well positioned to reduce fatal traffic crashes because, unlike human drivers, AVs will never drive drunk, drowsy, or distracted—all major contributors to roadway deaths. Additionally, New York is home to millions of individuals, including seniors and those with visual impairments, who stand to greatly benefit from the increased safety and mobility that AVs could provide. In addition to offering these safety and mobility benefits, autonomous driving technology can also help reduce traffic congestion, improve environmental quality, and advance transportation efficiency.

In light of these significant benefits, AVIA urges the Legislature to take action that continues to support AV operations by extending the AV testing pilot program to 2026 and enacting Part J of the Executive Budget. As New York continues to explore AVs, we look forward to working with you to make AVs a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Farrah', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Jeff Farrah
Executive Director, Autonomous Vehicle Industry Association

¹ <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813406>.