



New York Taxi Workers Alliance

AFL-CIO, Int'l. Transport Workers' Federation

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February 3, 2026

Chair Liz Krueger, NYS Senate Finance Committee

Chair J. Gary Pretlow, NYS Assembly Ways and Means Committee

OPPOSE AV For-Hire-Vehicle Service Authorization in NYS

Submitted via: financechair@nysenate.gov and WAMchair@nyassembly.gov

Dear Chair Krueger and Chair Pretlow,

On behalf of the 28,000 members of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance who drive taxis, Ubers, Lyfts, and green taxis for a full-time living, **I write to strongly oppose inclusion of the autonomous vehicle authorization in this legislative budget.**

The proposal creates an effectively self-regulating framework for autonomous technology that has not proven itself capable of operating safely in dense urban environments, and would decimate drivers' employment in upstate New York.

There are over 100,000 taxi and for-hire vehicle drivers in New York City, and thousands more throughout New York State. While the current bill exempts New York City from its scope, it treats upstate ridehail driver jobs losses as expendable, less than ten years after Albany rolled out the red carpet for Uber and Lyft, touting their introduction as job creators in the upstate economy.¹ But it's also impossible to believe that in a state where roughly 90% of the ridehail market is in New York City, Waymo would be content to see its service limited to cities like Buffalo and Rochester, while they are already active in places like Los Angeles,² San Francisco,³ and Atlanta.⁴ The inclusion of this bill in the budget is no doubt a stalking horse for the introduction of AV FHV services in New York City, where most drivers work full-time and are the primary breadwinners for their families.

¹ <https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/robert-g-ortt/uber-launches-buffalo-western-new-york>

² <https://www.statesman.com/business/technology/article/waymo-robotaxi-hits-child-california-probe-21329102.php>

³ <https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/waymos-san-francisco-outage-raises-doubts-over-robotaxi-readiness-during-crises-2025-12-27/>

⁴ <https://www.atlantaneWSfirst.com/2025/12/05/waymo-self-driving-cars-under-investigation-passing-stopped-aps-buses/>

Nothing in the budget's AV framework provides for data transparency or accountability when AVs fail and violate the traffic law or cause crashes. While, per-mile driven, TLC licensed drivers, for example, are the safest on the road,⁵ and held to much more stringent safety standards than other drivers, nothing in the budget's AV authorization indicates that there would be any enforcement against driverless AVs that commit traffic violations, or that there is any accountability for their unsafe operation. An FHV driver who fails to stop for a school bus twice is eligible for license revocation—what happens when a Waymo blows past a school bus?⁶ This bill provides no accountability.

Ultimately, AVs have not yet proven themselves capable of operating safely and efficiently in dense urban environments, and they should be subject to a moratorium until further, more rigorous, and most importantly, **independent**, study.

If you should require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at Bdesai@nytwa.org. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Bhairavi Desai, Executive Director
New York Taxi Workers Alliance

⁵ <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pr2024/10-years-vision-zero.shtml#:~:text=%22On%20this%20milestone%20anniversary%2C%20we,driver%2Dtraining%20and%20licensing.%22;>

⁶ <https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/News/waymo-responds-safety-concerns-amid-investigation-incidents-caught/story?id=128102923>