

Testimony on House Bill 4063
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House Committee on Transportation Policy
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Chair McLain and Members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area, tasked by both the federal and state governments with providing a significant set of services to the region, including land use and transportation planning. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss autonomous vehicles (AVs), which have the potential to dramatically reshape our transportation system and communities in the decades to come.

AVs present both tremendous promise and significant concerns for the Portland region. On one hand, they might help traffic move more safely and efficiently and provide better options to communities that currently lack transportation choices. On the other, they could increase the amount of driving in our region, producing additional congestion, pollution, and sprawl; cause thousands of people who drive for a living to lose their jobs; and have significant negative impacts on existing local revenue sources, such as parking fees.

As the regional planning agency for the state's largest metropolitan area, Metro has a particular interest in ensuring that Oregon establishes successful policy on testing and deploying AVs. When innovative technologies like transportation network companies (TNCs – e.g., Uber and Lyft) and car sharing came to Oregon, they started first in the Portland region, and we expect AVs to follow suit. Along with many of our local partner agencies, we are already deeply engaged in planning for AVs. In fact, Metro is one of only a handful of agencies in the country to have created a position dedicated to planning for AVs and other emerging technologies.

Based on this experience, we respectfully request the following amendments to HB 4063-1.

First, and most importantly, local and regional agencies should be well-represented on the Task Force on Autonomous Vehicles.

Local jurisdictions are equal partners with the state in managing the transportation system. Cities and counties own and manage many of the streets on which AVs will operate, and regional agencies are responsible for planning, investing in, and operating the transportation system in ways that will influence how AVs affect mobility, pollution, land use, equity, and congestion in our communities. Metro and many of our local partners have already taken significant action to prepare for AVs, including strategic planning, policy development, and modeling and analysis of impacts on traffic and congestion.

The -1 amendment includes six representatives of state agencies on the task force. We request that the task force also include significant representation for local governments, metropolitan planning organizations and transit agencies. Other groups that have a strong interest in this conversation include bicycle and pedestrian advocates (for safety reasons) and disability rights

advocates, as well as the freight industry (given the likely eventual deployment of AVs in the inter-city trucking industry).

Second, we recommend that additional topics be included in the task force's charge.

We understand that the language in the -1 amendment related to a voluntary AV testing program will be removed in a subsequent amendment. We agree with that change because we believe permitting and reporting should be required for any AV testing that takes place on public roads. This is necessary both to protect public safety and to ensure that public partners can obtain the data they need to develop good policy. Establishing parameters for AV testing and pilot programs, as well as eventual deployment, is an appropriate topic for the task force. We recommend adding the following items to the list of topics to be considered by the task force, related to both pilot testing and deployment of AVs:

- Permitting
- Sharing of transportation data
- Requirements for testing vehicles prior to deployment

Thank you once again for the opportunity to participate in this important conversation. With the proper membership and charge, the task force proposed in this legislation can attract innovation to Oregon and ensure that AVs advance our state's economic, environmental, and equity goals. We look forward to helping craft legislation that appropriately engages local and regional agencies that have led the way in planning for AVs in Oregon and that effectively guarantees public safety and oversight as we integrate this exciting technology into our communities.