

Submitter: Mallory Gruben
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4085

Members of the House Transportation Committee,

I recently became aware of House Bill 4085, a bill that would open Oregon's public roads to robotaxis, invite them into our for-hire transportation market, and block local regulation of robotaxis and autonomous vehicles. You must vehemently oppose this bill, for the good of Oregon's drivers, pedestrians, and rideshare workers.

Oregon rideshare drivers have been asking for basic workplace protections like minimum wage, sick leave, and protection from unjust terminations -- something that would create an important parity with rideshare drivers in Washington, where lawmakers already passed these protections (you can read more about just how much better Washington has done for its drivers than Oregon here: https://www.driversunionwa.org/know_your_rights). Instead of making progress on fairer jobs and worker rights, HB 4085 threatens to replace local jobs with robots for the benefit of out-of-state corporations. These jobs are disproportionately held by immigrants and people of color, and provide for thousands of local families.

The news coming from states where lawmakers failed to protect residents from these glitchy, experimental robotaxis is bleak. Vehicles behave erratically, block emergency vehicles, trap passengers, shut down during power outages, ignore crosswalks and road barriers, and have struck people and animals. Hundreds of thousands of autonomous vehicles have been recalled for safety issues. Waymo's robotaxis are currently under multiple federal investigations for their behavior around schools and school buses, including striking a child near an elementary school. These risks do not fall equally, either: The technology behind autonomous vehicles has been shown to be worse at identifying pedestrians with darker skin than lighter skin, and worse at identifying children than adults.

HB 4085 puts our communities at risk, hurts local workers and families, blocks local jurisdictions from the choice of whether to appropriately regulate robotaxis, and ignores Oregon's values of equality and workers' rights. Are you really willing to replace jobs that Oregon families depend on with robotaxis that don't economically benefit Oregonians and are known to cause chaos and create danger?

Vote no on HB 4085, protect local jobs and communities, and keep experimental robotaxis off our roads.

Sincerely,

Mallory Gruben
Senate District 23 | House District 45