

Submitter:

Sophie Geyer

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4085

I am writing to express my vehement opposition to HB 4085. As drafted by Chief Sponsors Representative Susan McLain and Representative Shelly Boshart Davis, this bill is a direct assault on local sovereignty and public safety. Section 13 of the bill explicitly forbids Oregon cities from regulating, taxing, or even setting "performance standards" for autonomous vehicle (AV) networks. This "preemption" clause is a dangerous gift to the tech industry, ensuring that cities like Portland or Eugene cannot implement their own safety guardrails even if these vehicles begin failing on our streets. It is deeply concerning that Rep. McLain, as Chair of this committee, has admitted to meeting with industry lobbyists from Waymo and Google to help draft this language. Since November 2025, Google Client Services, LLC has funneled thousands of dollars into PACs and individual accounts associated with this very committee's leadership. This is not public policy; it is corporate-authored legislation that prioritizes the profit margins of Alphabet and Waymo over the safety of Oregonians.

We have already seen the gruesome consequences of giving this technology "free rein" without local oversight. On October 2, 2023, in San Francisco, a Cruise robotaxi struck a pedestrian and—because its software misidentified the collision—performed a "pullover maneuver" that dragged the woman 20 feet while she was pinned beneath the car. The vehicle eventually came to rest with its rear tire on her legs while she was screaming for help. Cruise then attempted to hide the full footage from regulators, a lack of transparency that would be virtually unpunishable under the hands-off framework proposed in HB 4085. If this bill passes, Oregon cities will be legally barred from taking immediate action if a similar catastrophe occurs on our own streets.

Emerging technology requires rigorous, localized regulation, not a blank check from the legislature. Rep. McLain and Rep. Boshart Davis are effectively asking us to trust the "safety" claims of companies that have already undergone multiple federal recalls for failing to detect simple road barriers like chains and gates. Our streets are a public trust, and the power to govern them must remain with the people and their local representatives—not with politicians who have been bought out by the very corporations they are supposed to be overseeing. I urge you to vote "No" on HB 4085 and reject this attempt to trade public lives for corporate lobbyist favors.