



Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

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DATE: April 21, 2025
TO: Joint Committee on Transportation
FROM: Carla Phelps, Administrator, Commerce and Compliance Division, Oregon
Department of Transportation
SUBJECT: HB 2671 – Highly Autonomous Vehicles Testing Program

INTRODUCTION

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)'s mission is to provide a safe and reliable multimodal transportation system that connects people and helps Oregon's communities and economy thrive. The department administers programs and services related to Oregon's system of highways, roads, bridges and railways, public transportation services, transportation safety, driver and vehicle licensing, and motor carrier regulation. These duties include creating and overseeing opportunities for the introduction and expansion of highly automated vehicle (HAV) usage in Oregon, currently done through a voluntary testing program.

House Bill 2671 allows the testing of HAVs on Oregon highways by creating new provisions for the Oregon Vehicle Code and amending existing statutes. The bill outlines specifics for a new HAV testing program, including statutory definitions, permit, vehicle and driver requirements, manufacturer reporting requirements, liability, penalties and ODOT's obligations, with an operative date of January 1, 2027. This new HAV testing program would replace the existing voluntary testing program.

DISCUSSION

Oregon has long been interested in the impact that autonomous vehicles may have on several topics. The Task Force on Autonomous Vehicles was formed following passage of HB 4063 in 2018. The Task Force issued reports in 2018 and 2019. The 2018 report included recommendations related to (1) licensing and registration; (2) law enforcement and crash reporting; (3) cybersecurity; and (4) insurance and liability. The 2019 report included recommendations on six topics, which included: (1) vehicle code amendments and public safety; (2) cybersecurity, privacy and data; (3) road and infrastructure design; (4) land use; (5) public transit; and (6) workforce changes. Following the issuance of the Task Force's reports, ODOT developed a voluntary testing program. The testing requirements provided in House Bill 2671 largely reflect the licensing and permit recommendations from the Task Force's 2018 report.

ODOT's Office of Innovative Funding works with companies interested in bringing autonomous vehicles to Oregon. The office has a voluntary testing notification form, which is used to facilitate the

exchange of information between autonomous vehicle manufacturers and ODOT. This voluntary notification process allows ODOT to alert Oregon State Patrol of testing activity and provide safety information to interested companies on work zones and lane closures on proposed test routes and dates. It also allows ODOT to notify potentially impacted regions throughout the state about testing.

The current testing framework could be modified to accommodate the requirements of House Bill 2671. The existing review process relies on manual efforts to monitor for, review, and forward relevant information from voluntary submissions. Implementation of House Bill 2671 will require a more robust process that automates and integrates elements of the application requirements. Additional changes needed would include collecting the permit fees, providing for a more rigorous review of the applications, and providing for a contested case hearing if ODOT denies, suspends, refuses to renew, or revokes a testing permit.

House Bill 2671 allows for the testing of vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) over 10,001 pounds. Commercial vehicles with a GVWR of more than 10,001 pounds are subject to all applicable federal and state regulations and would need to comply with commercial registration requirements, size and weight regulations, variance permit requirements, applicable state and federal taxes (including Oregon's Weight-Mile Tax Program), and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. ODOT's Commerce and Compliance Division programs could accommodate HAVs, and in coordination with OIF, adopt the necessary amendments to Oregon Administrative Rule to implement the testing program envisioned in this bill. The necessary rule changes and systems programming could be completed by the bill's operative date of January 1, 2027.

CONCLUSION

ODOT has been anticipating the introduction of HAVs and is committed to coordinating and collaborating with the HAV industry as vehicle technology continues to develop. The department currently oversees a voluntary testing program for autonomous vehicles. House Bill 2671 would establish a mandatory testing program for these vehicles, and ODOT programs are prepared to incorporate the changes necessary to implement this bill if passed.