

Submitter: Tim Carter

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4085

My name is Tim Carter. I am an Oregon resident and a rideshare driver, and I support allowing autonomous vehicle services, such as Waymo, to operate in Oregon. Make no mistake that HB4085 does not directly address rideshare (Uber and Lyft), however there are implications for autonomous transit opportunities. It's come to my realization that app-based rideshare work under Uber and Lyft deserves a more honest look. Drivers are labeled independent contractors, yet have no control over pay, dispatch, or deactivation, while absorbing all costs and risk. Once fuel, maintenance, insurance, depreciation, unpaid time, and self-employment taxes are factored in, many drivers earn well below minimum wage or lose money altogether.

Oregon has independent contractor laws meant to prevent this kind of labor abuse, but they are not meaningfully enforced against Uber and Lyft. As a result, many drivers (who are financially desperate or unaware of the long-term costs), remain trapped in a system that steadily drains their income and vehicle equity. This problem is made worse by online "gig economy" influencers who present themselves as driver advocates while downplaying expenses, exaggerating earnings, and normalizing exploitative conditions. Their content frequently functions as propaganda for the platforms and distorts the public conversation around rideshare work.

Even though I've completed over 20,000 rides as a rideshare driver, opposing autonomous vehicles feels intellectually dishonest when advocating for workers rights. What would be protected is not sustainable work, but a business model that depends on confusion, constant recruitment, and regulatory inaction. If Oregon is unwilling or unable to enforce its own labor protections, then automation becomes a practical and ethical alternative. Not because technology is preferable to people, but because the current system already fails the people within it. Autonomous vehicles should be seen not as a threat to workers, but as a response to a broken status quo that has left many drivers worse off than when they started.

I support the immediate implementation of autonomous vehicles to hopefully reduce the reliance on predatory companies like Uber and Lyft in Portland, Oregon. Also to accelerate the safety of passengers who seemingly, on mass, are experiencing and litigating the worst of tragedies inside of rideshare vehicles.

Tim Carter, Native Portlander
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