

Submitter:

Michael Erickson

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4085

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 4085. Rich tech companies see an opportunity to make even more money with autonomous vehicles and have made it their mission to convince us that AVs are inevitable. We do not have to accept their vision of the future.

Please think critically about this technology before you blindly accept what companies like Waymo/Google tell you. I saw an interview of Rep. McLain, where she repeated the talking point that AVs provide "new options" for people who can't drive. But do they? Are AVs all that different from taxis, which people who can't drive have had access to for probably about as long as we've had cars? It would seem the main difference is taking the driver out of the car and replacing them with a computer (and agents in a remote facility). Meanwhile the public has to figure out how to share the road with vehicles we can't communicate with and which don't truly have an understanding of their surroundings. Not to mention the privacy implications of having a fleet of vehicles with cameras and advanced sensors rolling around providing a private company (whose main business is in advertising) with detailed, real time information about the occupants of an entire city. If you want to provide all of us with new options, including those who can't or don't want to drive, I would suggest looking at ways to expand transit access over indulging tech companies, who are salivating at the idea of directing even more of our money to them, regardless of external costs borne by society.

Waymo states that their vehicles are 90 percent safer than human drivers. This is a statistic that is generated by the company itself, not a third party. I implore you to take this claim with a grain of salt. After all, data can be manipulated to say practically anything you want. During the Dec. 2025 power outage in San Francisco, which lead to Waymo vehicles becoming disabled in the middle of streets and intersections, worsening an already dangerous situation, that mileage was probably counted as "safe" by Waymo because nobody was injured or killed directly by their cars. There have also been plenty of documented incidents of Waymo vehicles disobeying instructions from emergency responders and displaying other behavior that would be considered reckless if a human driver were responsible.

To close, I also want to say that I strongly oppose the provisions in this bill that would preempt localities from regulating or even taxing AV companies/fleets. As a resident of the inner core of Portland, I'm likely to be among the most highly impacted people if this technology is deployed in Oregon. I want my city to be able to respond to

problems created by AVs. Please don't tie their hands.