

SB226 INTRODUCED



1 SB226
2 8XG7222-1
3 By Senator Allen
4 RFD: Transportation and Energy
5 First Read: 19-Mar-24



SYNOPSIS:

This bill would authorize motor vehicles to be operated on the public roads of this state that are equipped with an automated driving system, which is defined as hardware and software that performs the entire dynamic driving task on a sustained basis, under certain conditions.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to motor vehicles; to provide requirements for the authorization and use of motor vehicles equipped with an automated driving system.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. For purposes of this act, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) ADS-EQUIPPED VEHICLE. A vehicle equipped with an automated driving system.

(2) AUTOMATED DRIVING SYSTEM or ADS. The hardware and software that are collectively capable of performing the entire dynamic driving task on a sustained basis regardless of whether it is limited to a specific operational design domain.



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(3) CONVENTIONAL HUMAN DRIVER. An individual, licensed or otherwise permitted by law to operate a vehicle, who manually exercises in-vehicle braking, accelerating, steering, and transmission gear selection input devices in order to operate a vehicle.

(4) DYNAMIC DRIVING TASK or DDT. All of the real-time operational and tactical functions required to operate a vehicle in on-road traffic, excluding the strategic functions such as trip scheduling and selection of destinations and waypoints.

(5) MINIMAL RISK CONDITION. A reasonably safe state to which an ADS brings an ADS-equipped vehicle upon experiencing a performance-relevant failure of the vehicle or the vehicle's ADS that renders the ADS unable to perform the entire DDT.

(6) OPERATIONAL DESIGN DOMAIN or ODD. Operating conditions under which a given ADS or feature thereof is specifically designed to function, including, but not limited to, environmental, geographical, and time-of-day restrictions, and the requisite presence or absence of certain traffic or roadway characteristics

Section 2. (a) An individual may operate an ADS-equipped vehicle with the ADS engaged on the public roads of this state only under the following conditions:

(1) The ADS-equipped vehicle is capable of complying with both of the following:

a. All applicable traffic and motor vehicle safety laws and rules of this state which govern the performance of the dynamic driving task, unless an exemption has been granted



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pursuant to subsection (b).

b. All applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, except to the extent an exemption has been granted under applicable federal law.

(2) The ADS-equipped vehicle shall be registered and titled in accordance with the laws of this state.

(b) An ADS-equipped vehicle may be operated on the public roads of this state without a conventional human driver physically present in the vehicle if the vehicle is capable of achieving a minimal risk condition.

Section 3. An ADS-equipped vehicle may operate on public roads in this state only if a person submits proof to the Department of Revenue of financial responsibility satisfactory to the department that the ADS-equipped vehicle meets all of the requirements of the Mandatory Liability Insurance Act, Chapter 7A of Title 32, Code of Alabama 1975.

Section 4. If a traffic accident occurs that involves an ADS-equipped vehicle that is being operated without a conventional human driver, the requirements of Chapter 10 of Title 32, Code of Alabama 1975, do not apply to the ADS-equipped vehicle, provided all of the following occur:

(1) The owner of the ADS-equipped vehicle, or an individual acting on behalf of the owner, promptly contacts the applicable law enforcement agency to report the crash.

(2) If the ADS-equipped vehicle has the capability of promptly alerting a law enforcement agency or emergency services, the vehicle alerts a law enforcement agency or emergency services to the traffic accident.



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85 (3) The ADS-equipped vehicle remains at the scene or in
86 the immediate vicinity of the crash until law enforcement
87 arrives.

88 (4) The ADS-equipped vehicle's registration and
89 insurance information is provided to the parties affected by
90 the traffic accident.

91 Section 5. A conventional human driver of an
92 ADS-equipped vehicle is required to have a valid driver
93 license for the class of vehicle being operated.

94 Section 6. (a) Except as otherwise provided in this act
95 or in Chapter 9B of Title 32, Code of Alabama 1975, and
96 notwithstanding any other provision of law, ADS-equipped
97 vehicles and automated driving systems are governed
98 exclusively by this act.

99 (b) No state or local entity may impose requirements,
100 including performance standards, specific to the operation of
101 ADS-equipped vehicles, automated driving systems, or automated
102 commercial vehicles as defined in Section 32-9B-1, Code of
103 Alabama 1975, except as specifically authorized by this act.

104 (c) No municipality or other local or state entity may
105 impose a tax on, or impose requirements on ADS-equipped
106 vehicles or automated driving systems, where the tax or other
107 requirement relates specifically to the operation of
108 ADS-equipped vehicles.

109 Section 7. When engaged, the automated driving system
110 shall be deemed the driver or operator of the ADS-equipped
111 vehicle for the purpose of assessing compliance with
112 applicable traffic or motor vehicle laws and shall be deemed



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to satisfy all physical acts required by a driver or operator of a vehicle via electronic means.

Section 8. (a) Liability for a traffic accident involving an ADS-equipped vehicle shall be determined in accordance with applicable state law, federal law, or common law.

(b) The original manufacturer of a vehicle converted by a third party into an ADS-equipped vehicle may not be held liable in, and shall have a defense to and be dismissed from, any legal action brought against the original manufacturer by any individual injured due to an alleged vehicle defect caused by the conversion of the vehicle, or by equipment installed by the converter, unless the alleged defect was present in the vehicle as originally manufactured.

Section 9. (a) An ADS-equipped vehicle that is designed to be operated exclusively by an automated driving system for all trips shall not be subject to motor vehicle equipment laws or rules of this state that relate to or support motor vehicle operation by a conventional human driver but are not relevant to an automated driving system.

(b) Any ADS-equipped vehicle or automated commercial vehicle, as defined in Section 32-9B-1, Code of Alabama 1975, may be equipped with ADS marker lamps in accordance with the SAE Recommended Practice and Standard guidelines, including SAE J3134. For purposes of this section, an ADS marker lamp means a device that emits light to indicate when an ADS is engaged in the operation of the vehicle.

Section 10. This act shall become effective October 1,



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