

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WV Autonomous Vehicle Law Sets Dangerous Precedent

Washington, DC – The Truck Safety Coalition is deeply concerned by West Virginia’s HB4787, “Fully Autonomous Vehicles Act” which becomes state law on June 10th. This law permits the use of fully autonomous vehicles, including commercial motor vehicles in West Virginia. TSC President & Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways Board Member Dawn King warned, “Unleashing autonomous trucks absent any meaningful testing or performance standards is incredibly unsound and unsafe.”

Public roadway users should never be unwillingly signed up to participate in vehicle safety performance trials. Federal regulators, autonomous vehicle technology and equipment manufacturers, safety advocates, and additional stakeholders all recognize there are many complicated factors to be addressed before deploying autonomous vehicles on U.S. roadways. Several are listed in [Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety’s Autonomous Vehicle \(AV\) Tenets](#) white paper, to include but are not limited to strong federal performance standards, testing requirements (to include common definitions and standards for success) and oversight, cybersecurity standards, software standards, Operational Design Domain-specific benchmarks, and much more. Absent concurrence on these other issues, it is unsafe to permit AV trucks to operate without constraint. Self-regulation is not a viable option when those who stand to benefit the most from commercializing the product are the regulators.

Autonomous trucking has the future potential to significantly reduce truck crash deaths and injuries. Speed-related crashes, driver fatigue, and distracted driving are among the crash factors that could potentially be mitigated by autonomous commercial motor vehicles. However, public safety must be the highest priority in the testing and deployment of this technology. Robust federal

standards must be created and met by manufacturers prior to allowing these vehicles on roads and highways. The general public deserves to know the highest standards have been met and their life safety is not part of an informal technology pilot program.

NHTSA estimates over 5,600 lives were lost in large truck crashes in 2021, the highest in recorded history and a 13% jump over the previous year. TSC urges policymakers to prioritize meaningful action to drive down truck crash deaths and injuries such as requiring Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB) and Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) on all classes of commercial motor vehicles, requiring side, front, and rear underride guards on all commercial motor vehicles, requiring the use of speed limiters on all commercial motor vehicles and the development of strong testing and performance standards and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards specific to the needs presented by autonomous trucks.

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The Truck Safety Coalition (TSC) is a partnership between Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH), also known as The CRASH Foundation, and Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.). The Truck Safety Coalition is dedicated to reducing the number of deaths and injuries caused by truck-related crashes, providing compassionate support to truck crash survivors and families of truck crash victims, and educating the public, policymakers, and the media about truck safety issues. Visit our website at <https://trucksafety.org>