

Committee on Infrastructure and Security

CS/HB 311 — Autonomous Vehicles

by State Affairs Committee and Rep. Fischer (CS/CS/SB 932 by Appropriations Committee; Infrastructure and Security Committee; and Senator Brandes)

The bill revises various provisions of law relating to autonomous vehicles. The bill deems an automated driving system to be the operator of an autonomous vehicle while operating in autonomous mode, regardless of whether a person is physically present in the vehicle. The bill authorizes operation of a fully autonomous vehicle on Florida roads regardless of whether a human operator is physically present in the vehicle. Under the bill, a licensed human operator is not required to operate a fully autonomous vehicle. The bill authorizes an autonomous vehicle or a fully autonomous vehicle equipped with a teleoperation system to operate without a human operator physically present in the vehicle when the teleoperation system is engaged. A remote human operator must be physically present in the United States and be licensed to operate a motor vehicle by a United States jurisdiction.

The bill exempts fully autonomous vehicles operating with the automated driving system engaged from certain duties under chapter 316, F.S., such as the duty to give information and render aid, in the event of an accident. Provisions relating to unattended motor vehicles or property are also deemed inapplicable to such fully autonomous vehicles. The bill amends other provisions related to video displays, use of wireless communications devices, and other statutes to incorporate exemptions for autonomous vehicles.

Additionally, the bill applies provisions relating to the operation of transportation network companies and vehicles to on-demand autonomous vehicle networks. The bill requires a fully autonomous vehicle with the automated driving system engaged while logged on to an on-demand autonomous vehicle network or engaged in a prearranged ride to have specified insurance coverage. The bill also requires proof of financial responsibility to respond to a claim for damages arising out of a motor vehicle accident for owners or registrants of certain fully autonomous vehicles that are not subject to the insurance requirements described above. These requirements are repealed on January 1, 2024.

The bill authorizes the Florida Turnpike Enterprise within the FDOT to enter into one or more agreements to fund, construct, and operate facilities for the advancement of autonomous and connected innovative transportation technologies for specified purposes.

The bill expresses legislative intent to provide for uniformity of laws governing autonomous vehicles throughout the state and prohibits a local government from imposing any tax, fee, for-hire vehicle requirement, or other requirement on automated driving systems, autonomous vehicles, or on a person who operates an autonomous vehicle.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2019.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 110-0