



**TEAMSTERS
LOCAL 959
STATE OF ALASKA**

Affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Gary Dixon, Secretary-Treasurer

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March 31, 2026

VIA Email: House.Community.And.Regional.Affairs@akleg.gov

The House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

House Community and Regional Affairs

120 4th St.

Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Letter of Support for House Bill 217 – Autonomous Vehicle Regulation

Members of the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee:

Alaska Teamsters Local 959 respectfully asks that you support the passage of House Bill 217, an act to regulate autonomous vehicles in Alaska for commercial use. The integration of autonomous vehicles on roadways in the United States is rapidly advancing as technology continually develops. Autonomous features have most notably been developing in commercial areas of ride sharing and delivery and are starting to be introduced in hauling freight. We strongly support the commercial use of autonomous vehicles being regulated to protect the safety of other drivers on the road, as well as protecting the jobs of hard-working Alaskans.

Alaskan roads are in constant states of flux with snow, ice, rain, and potholes. It is well understood by Alaskan drivers that quick reaction time and a sense of adaptation are required to operate a vehicle on the road system, especially with passengers. The use of a vehicle safety operator will add a layer of safety for any autonomous vehicle operating for commercial use, as the technology may not be able to adapt to the Alaskan roads.

Teamsters Local 959 thanks the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee for hearing the legislation, and we ask the Committee to pass House Bill 217 for the safety of Alaskan drivers and the protection of Alaskan Jobs.

Sincerely,
Teamsters Local 959

Patrick FitzGerald
Political Coordinator

PF:jk

03312026 House Community and Regional Affairs Committee - House Bill 217, Autonomous Vehicle Regulation Support Letter.docx



From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: HB 217 comment
Date: Thursday, April 2, 2026 3:09:19 PM

Hi; reading about the bill to forbid level 5 autonomous vehicles in Alaska, I suggest there may be substantial issues involved that may have been overlooked. First; sodium ion batteries can now work to -40 degrees f and evs are becoming more practical for Alaska. Two- level 5 autonomous vehicles driving the Alaska highway down the road may substantially increase traffic to Alaska, increase business and economics. Three- Canadians may be operating level 5 autonomous vehicles themselves liberally in the future and might coordinate electric recharge stations with Alaska to expedite efficient tech development of autonomous vehicle cargo deliveries to Alaska and across the Yukon as well. They would also need to let sealed vehicles pass through Canada unmolested ala NAFTA. Requiring human operators would negatively impact that line of development and be somewhat backward. Of course autonomous AI vehicles do compete with humans to some extent yet that cat seems to already have escaped the bag as has AI development.

Thanks for your time, May you be as wise as Solomon in making your decision eventually. P.S. THE place I am repurchasing that I owned from 1990 for some time still hasn't got a road to it 5 miles south of the Wrangell airport so I had difficulty logging in to Legislative Affairs and sent this email instead.

Garrison C Gibson

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May the will of God develop your happiness righteously through grace.



April 9, 2026

The Honorable Rebecca Himschoot, Co-Chair
The Honorable Donna Mears, Co-Chair
House Committee on Community & Regional Affairs
State Capitol
Terry Miller Building
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 217 An Act regulating autonomous vehicles.

Dear Co-Chairs Himschoot, Mears and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share TechNet's perspective on HB 217 and the regulation of autonomous vehicles.

TechNet is a national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and state level. Our diverse membership includes companies ranging from startups to some of the world's most recognized brands, representing more than five million employees across information technology, e-commerce, advanced energy, cybersecurity, transportation, and finance.

Safety is the top priority for TechNet and our members when it comes to the deployment of autonomous vehicles (AVs). Our members invest heavily in testing, monitoring, and compliance to ensure their vehicles meet or exceed all applicable federal safety standards. We share the Committee's commitment to protecting Alaskans and ensuring that new technologies are introduced responsibly.

While we appreciate the intent of HB 217 to promote safety, we believe the bill would have the opposite effect by limiting the use of safe, proven AV technology on Alaska's roads. Additionally, we are concerned that certain provisions would have the unintended effect of preventing autonomous vehicles from operating in Alaska altogether. Clearly, Alaska highways are different than the highways in the lower-48. HB 217 would prevent companies from even working to make AVs workable in Alaska not just the commercial vehicles but also likely passenger vehicles.

The requirement that an interstate commerce autonomous vehicle include a "human safety operator" is inconsistent with how this technology is designed and currently deployed. Autonomous commercial vehicles are already operating safely in other parts of the country without an onboard driver, under existing federal oversight.

In addition, the bill appears to rely on assumptions that do not align with current regulatory frameworks. For example, there are no federal standards governing a "human safety operator," yet the bill requires compliance with such standards. The bill would also significantly alter established liability principles by automatically assigning fault to the

"human safety operator," regardless of the circumstances. This provision is counter to standard procedures for determining who is at fault in an accident.

Autonomous commercial vehicles have the potential to provide meaningful benefits to Alaska. With ongoing workforce shortages in the trucking industry, this technology could help support reliable delivery of goods across the state. It would also create new jobs in fleet management, logistics, maintenance, and operations, while supporting Alaska's broader transportation infrastructure.

Autonomous heavy-duty vehicles that operate in interstate commerce will increase the safety and efficiency of freight movement. According to a study funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, automating long-haul trucking will spur \$111 billion in aggregate investment spending across the U.S. economy, increase total U.S. employment by 26,400 to 35,100 jobs per year on average, and raise annual earnings for all U.S. workers by more than \$200 per worker per year.

Autonomous trucks will also alleviate supply chain challenges and augment the current truck driver workforce. Federal government data estimates that U.S. freight volume will increase 50% by 2050. At the same time, there is a shortage of truck drivers to move this freight, and the problem is set to get worse. Unfortunately, the U.S. trucking industry is currently short of an estimated 78,000 truck drivers due to a long-term decline in new drivers entering the profession, and an annual turnover rate exceeding 90%. The truck driver shortage is estimated to reach 160,000 in 2031. The United States needs truck drivers, and autonomous trucks can help augment the workforce to help solve supply chain challenges.

TechNet and our members strongly support thoughtful, data-driven policymaking that prioritizes safety while allowing innovation to develop responsibly. We would welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Committee, regulators, and other stakeholders to develop a framework that ensures strong oversight without imposing a de facto ban on autonomous vehicles.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee not to advance HB 217 in its current form and instead consider alternative approaches that promote both safety and opportunity for Alaska.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rose Feliciano', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rose Feliciano
Executive Director
Washington + Northwest

From:



Subject:

HB 217: TechNet Follow Up

Date:

Friday, April 10, 2026 1:04:34 PM

Attachments:

[image.png](#)

Dear Members of the House Community & Regional Affairs Committee:

I appreciated the opportunity to testify yesterday on HB 217. I raised the concern that HB 217 would likely result in no AV companies testing in Alaska. I wanted to follow up and explain.

Effectively, a driver-in requirement without a clear deployment path shows an unwillingness to welcome autonomous vehicles. Companies are highly unlikely to conduct testing that won't lead to eventual deployment of autonomous vehicle technologies.

If you have any further questions please reach out to me or Ben Mohr, my contract lobbyist.

R

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Rose Feliciano

Executive Director | Washington & the Northwest

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