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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.



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

34 (4) DYNAMIC DRIVING TASK or DDT. All of the real-time
35 operational and tactical functions required to operate a
36 vehicle in on-road traffic, excluding the strategic functions
37 such as trip scheduling and selection of destinations and
38 waypoints, including, but not limited to:

- 39 a. Lateral vehicle motion control via steering.
- 40 b. Longitudinal vehicle motion control via acceleration
41 and deceleration.
- 42 c. Monitoring the driving environment via object and
43 event detection, recognition, classification, and response
44 preparation.
- 45 d. Object and event response execution.
- 46 e. Manuever planning.
- 47 f. Enhancing conspicuity via lighting, signaling, and
48 gesturing.

49 (5) FULLY AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE. A motor vehicle equipped
50 with an automated driving system designed to function without
51 a human driver as a Level 4 or Level 5 automation system under
52 the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Standard J3016.

53 (6) MINIMAL RISK CONDITION. A stable, stopped condition
54 to which a user or an automated driving system may bring a
55 vehicle after performing the DDT fallback in order to reduce
56 the risk of a crash when a given trip cannot or should not be



57 continued.

58 (7) ON-DEMAND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE NETWORK. A
59 transportation service or network that uses a software
60 application or other digital means to dispatch or otherwise
61 enable the prearrangement of transportation with ADS-equipped
62 vehicles for purposes of transporting passengers or goods,
63 including for-hire transportation and transportation of
64 passengers or goods for compensation.

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

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

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

76 a. All applicable traffic and motor vehicle safety laws
77 and rules of this state which govern the performance of the
78 dynamic driving task, unless an exemption has been granted
79 pursuant to subsection (b).

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

83 c. All applicable traffic control devices, including,
84 but not limited to, speed limit signs, other regulatory signs,



85 advisory signs, warning signs, barriers, and construction or
86 work zone signs.

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

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

93 Section 3. A fully autonomous vehicle may operate on
94 public roads in this state only if a person submits proof to
95 the Department of Revenue of financial responsibility that the
96 fully autonomous vehicle has single limits liability coverage,
97 by contract of insurance or by qualifying as a self-insurer,
98 of not less than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

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

104 (1) The owner of the ADS-equipped vehicle, or a person
105 acting on behalf of the owner, promptly contacts the
106 applicable law enforcement agency to report the crash.

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

111 (3) The ADS-equipped vehicle remains at the scene or in
112 the immediate vicinity of the crash until law enforcement



113 arrives.

114 (4) In accordance with Chapter 7A of Title 32, Code of
115 Alabama 1975, the ADS-equipped vehicle's registration and
116 insurance information is provided to the parties affected by
117 the traffic accident.

118 (5) In the event an ADS-equipped vehicle is not an
119 automated commercial motor vehicle under Section 32-9B-1 but
120 is being operated by a commercial entity without a
121 conventional human driver, the owner of the ADS-equipped
122 vehicle shall be deemed the operator of the vehicle and shall
123 maintain the ability to respond to damages for liability on
124 account of any accidents arising from the use of the
125 ADS-equipped vehicle or automated driving system in the
126 minimum amount of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per
127 accident for death, bodily injury, and property damage to a
128 third party.

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

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

137 (b) No state or local entity may impose requirements,
138 including performance standards, specific to the operation of
139 ADS-equipped vehicles, automated driving systems, or automated
140 commercial vehicles as defined in Section 32-9B-1, Code of



141 Alabama 1975, except as specifically authorized by this act.
142 Nothing in this section shall be construed to repeal or in any
143 way modify Section 32-9-29, Code of Alabama 1975.

144 (c) No municipality or other local or state entity may
145 impose a tax on, or impose requirements on ADS-equipped
146 vehicles or automated driving systems, where the tax or other
147 requirement relates specifically to the operation of
148 ADS-equipped vehicles.

149 Section 7. For purposes of this act and for assessing
150 compliance with applicable traffic or motor vehicle laws,
151 including rules of the road, unless the context otherwise
152 requires, the automated driving system shall be deemed to be
153 the operator of an ADS-equipped vehicle when:

154 (1) The automated driving system is engaged and solely
155 responsible for the driving task.

156 (2) The automated driving system is being operated and
157 maintained as intended by the manufacturer of the ADS-equipped
158 vehicle.

159 (3) A request to intervene has not been issued by the
160 ADS-equipped vehicle.

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

165 (b) The original manufacturer of a vehicle converted by
166 a third party into an ADS-equipped vehicle may not be held
167 liable in, and shall have a defense to and be dismissed from,
168 any legal action brought against the original manufacturer by



169 any individual injured due to an alleged vehicle defect caused
170 by the conversion of the vehicle, or by equipment installed by
171 the converter, unless the alleged defect was present in the
172 vehicle as originally manufactured.

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

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

186 Section 10. An on-demand autonomous vehicle network
187 shall be permitted to operate pursuant to state laws governing
188 the operation of transportation network companies with the
189 exception that any provision of this state's laws, including
190 Chapter 7C of Title 32, Code of Alabama 1975, which reasonably
191 applies only to a conventional human driver would not apply to
192 the operation of ADS-equipped vehicles with the ADS engaged on
193 an on-demand autonomous vehicle network. A fully autonomous
194 vehicle with the automated driving system engaged while logged
195 on to an on-demand autonomous vehicle network must meet the
196 insurance requirements in Section 4.



197 Section 11. Nothing in this act is intended to, nor be
198 construed to, require a county to construct, upgrade,
199 maintain, or place traffic control devices on county roads in
200 a manner that is above and beyond the manner in which roads
201 are constructed, upgraded, maintained, or designed for all
202 other vehicular traffic.

203 Section 12. This act shall become effective October 1,
204 2024.