

May 10, 2019

Senator Ben Allen
State Capitol, Room 4076
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 59 (Allen) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Allen:

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), an organization dedicated to advancing opportunity and prosperity for the residents of Los Angeles County, I am pleased to offer our support for Senate Bill (SB) 59. The LAEDC believes that SB 59, which would establish statewide guiding principles related to autonomous vehicle technology, will enhance California's global brand as an early adopter of autonomous vehicle technologies, products and services, and further boost the state's position as the global center for the fast-growing new mobility industry.

The new mobility industry, which includes electric and autonomous vehicles, digital service, and integrated infrastructure, is literally and figuratively paving a new road for and throughout California and its economy. From vehicle manufacturers such as Tesla and Faraday Future, to mobility-as-a-service providers such as Intel and Qualcomm, one of the LAEDC's economic development goals is to expand California's leadership position in the research, design, production and exportation of autonomous and other new mobility products and services. To this end, the LAEDC believes that SB 59 would help drive the consumer market for autonomous vehicles and related technologies, and in so doing, catalyze and accelerate the continued innovation, capitalization, attraction and launch of autonomous vehicle technology firms here in California, while also prioritizing the other co-equal goals of road and highway safety and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

In addition to the economic development benefits, the LAEDC sees several other important tangible benefits advanced by SB 59. First, autonomous vehicle technology will redefine how we – as Californians -- navigate our cities and towns, both as passengers inside vehicles and as pedestrians or as bicyclists sharing the road. Consequently, SB 59's aspirational vision to make roads safer by eliminating automobile crashes due to human error is a vision we all share.

Second, autonomous vehicle technology will reduce private automobile travel and related carbon emissions significantly since time spent idling, parking, and cruising in traffic will be decreased. These reductions do not include the even more promising prospect of autonomous vehicle technology in electric vehicles and shared fleets. Together, autonomous vehicle technology, electric vehicles, and shared rider services will greatly improve our state's environmental footprint through cleaner air and more efficient land use.

Finally, autonomous vehicles will provide high-quality transportation solutions that can positively impact professional and personal productivity. The deployment of autonomous vehicles to supplement public transportation for commuting students, professionals, families, disabled, and elderly individuals can increase access to employment, education, and other important services.

In sum, it is vital for California to build both the consumer and industrial markets for autonomous vehicle technology. Early-mover advantage, intense inter-firm networks amongst automobile designers, suppliers and OEMs, along with increased statewide public support and global awareness, make California the perfect place for this technology to thrive in. But, California will need to “get ahead of the curve” with the development and deployment of guiding rules for autonomous vehicles to complement, and at times, mediate, the private sector’s efforts. We believe SB 59 does just that, sending a strong message both to the new mobility industry as well as to the legacy “combustible engine” automobile industry that California cares deeply about Californians getting from point A to point B in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner.

For all of the above reasons, the LAEDC commends your leadership on this and other important mobility issues and offers its support for SB 59 and a statewide policy on autonomous vehicle technology.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Flaks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Flaks, Chief Operating Officer
Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation