

Senate and House Transportation Committees

Joint Hearing

Highly Automated Vehicles (HAV) Testing Legislation S.B. 427

Pennsylvania State Police Perspective

March 21, 2017



Good morning Chairmen and committee members. I am Major Edward C. Hoke, Director of the Bureau of Patrol, Pennsylvania State Police (PSP). I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony this morning on PSP's perspective regarding the proposed legislation for the testing of highly automated vehicles (HAVs) in the Commonwealth.

Ensuring highway safety is a core function of policing. The PSP and municipal police officers from all across the Commonwealth work hard every day enforcing traffic laws to prevent crashes and improve highway safety. The duty to enforce the law is an obligation taken very seriously by all police officers. Today's hearing on Senate Bill 427 to propose oversight of the emerging HAV industry is an important step forward to ensuring that the Commonwealth's law enforcement officers are provided with the statutory authority they need in order to keep our highways safe. Currently there are no laws that enable, prohibit or regulate the testing of HAVs on Commonwealth highways. The absence of legislation creates an enforcement void that our existing statutes do not address. Establishing a legal framework is necessary for the safe and responsible testing of HAVs on our highways both now and into the future.

Recognizing that this rapidly evolving industry has an interest in testing their vehicles on Pennsylvania highways in real world conditions the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) took the initiative to establish an Autonomous Vehicle Task Force. Last June, at the invitation of PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards, PSP joined with many other public and private stakeholders to formulate recommendations to develop policies which would regulate the testing of HAVs. The Task Force met monthly over the following

seven months and worked diligently toward this goal. Although comprised of a variety of different stakeholders, each with their own separate interests, the group never lost sight that public safety was paramount and had to remain the focal point of all of the policy recommendations. The Task Force completed its work in December and the recommendations were delivered to the Secretary's desk. Although the initial recommendations have been completed the work of the Task Force will continue into the future as this new and innovative technology evolves.

We live in an interesting and exciting time in history. While new and innovative technologies continue to provide new opportunities that were difficult to conceptualize just a few years ago, they also bring about many new challenges. No matter what those challenges maybe the PSP remain committed to protecting and serving the citizens and visitors of this Commonwealth just as they have since 1905. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with our perspective and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.