



RESEARCH PROJECT CAPSULE

April 2015

[15-3SS]

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROGRAM

Ensuring Safety in Autonomous Vehicle Legislation in Louisiana

JUST THE FACTS:

Start Date:

December 15, 2014

Duration:

10 months

End Date:

August 14, 2015

Funding:

FHWA

Principal Investigator:

Chester G. Wilmot

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Louisiana State University

Administrative Contact:

Mark Morvant, P.E.

Associate Director, Research
225-767-9124

Technical Contact:

Kirk Zeringue

Senior Research Engineer,
Special Studies
225-767-9169

Louisiana Transportation
Research Center
4101 Gourrier Ave
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Sponsored jointly by the Louisiana
Department of Transportation and
Development and Louisiana State
University

POINTS OF INTEREST:

Problem Addressed / Objective of
Research / Methodology Used
Implementation Potential

WWW.LTRC.LSU.EDU

PROBLEM

The states of Michigan, California, Nevada, and Florida, along with the District of Columbia, have recently passed legislation to allow the use of autonomous motor vehicles on public roads in their states under restricted conditions. Other states such as Colorado, New Hampshire, Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, Oregon, and Wisconsin also considered introducing legislation but decided not to at this stage. The issue facing Louisiana is which path to follow. Is it better to introduce legislation now or wait until later? This study is aimed at providing information that will help legislators make an informed decision on this matter.

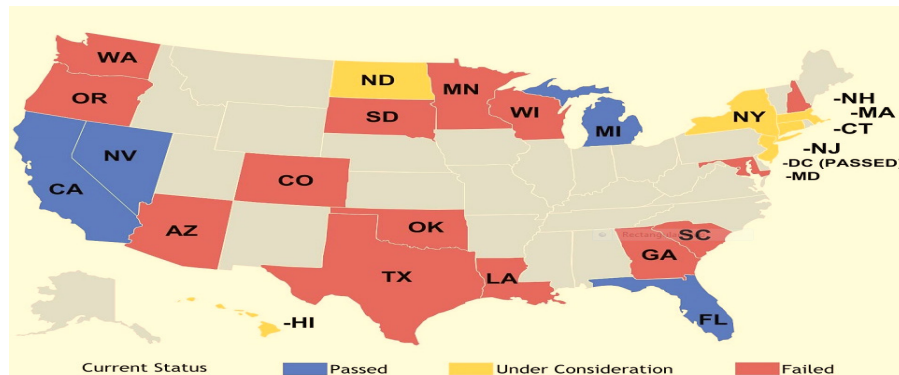


Figure 1. Automated Vehicle Legislation Status (2014)
Source: <http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/wiki/index.php/File:Statusmap14small.jpg>

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this study is to respond to House Resolution 133 introduced by Representative Leger of the Louisiana House of Representatives. The resolution was passed by the House in the 2014 Regular Session and states the following:

"To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to begin studying and testing autonomous motor vehicles and consider the promulgation of rules for the safe operation of such vehicles on the roads of the state."

The resolution goes on to make clear that "autonomous motor vehicles" are vehicles that drive themselves and are not vehicles with automated systems that assist a driver in the operation of a vehicle. Thus, there are autonomous (driverless) vehicles and automated (driver-assisted) vehicles. The systems that provide assistance to a driver in an automated vehicle includes devices such as emergency braking or adaptive cruise control, or can also include vehicle-to-vehicle communication informing of traffic conditions ahead. The resolution is aimed at identifying laws necessary to ensure the safe operation of driverless vehicles on roads in Louisiana.

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the study will be met by accomplishing the following tasks:

1. Reviewing literature to identify the state of technology and projected technological growth of autonomous and automated motor vehicles
2. Identifying agencies and organizations with a responsibility or interest in the technology
3. Identifying what other states have done regarding legislation on autonomous vehicles
4. Studying the case for standardization among states
5. Evaluating alternate courses of action
6. Making recommendations on legislation, rules, and courses of action for Louisiana

IMPLEMENTATION POTENTIAL

If the recommendation of the study includes introducing legislation, implementation will rest with the Louisiana State Legislature regarding legislation, and with the Department of Transportation and Development and the Office of Motor Vehicles regarding the development and implementation of regulations, licenses, and permits. While legislation on this topic may not be urgent, it is highly likely that legislation will be passed if the study determines it is beneficial to do so.