



Ford Motor Company
Tony Reinhart
Director

State & Local Governmental Affairs
3025 Highland Parkway
Downers Grove, IL 60515

February 7, 2022

Honorable Mike Petersen
Chair, Senate Committee on Transportation
300 SW 10th Ave Topeka, KS 66612

RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 379

Chair Petersen,

On behalf of Ford Motor Company, thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns with SB 379. This legislation would establish automated vehicle (AV) policy that is inconsistent with industry AV efforts and, if enacted, would narrow the opportunities in a highly competitive and innovative automated vehicles industry.

Development and deployment of autonomous vehicle technologies is a global competition that the US should want to win. What gets lost in this debate often is “why” these technologies are so important to capitalize upon. They hold the potential to improve the quality of life for so many in society. They will enable mobility for seniors and disabled, it can help manage urban quality of life issues, and countless other benefits.

Most importantly, it is a catalyst to start the next frontier of mobility that will help to virtually eliminate driver error – the most significant contributor to traffic fatalities today. Autonomous vehicles are a form of AI and need the same curation and support that other AI technologies require – it learns by doing and it learns exponentially when scaled.

Ford believes federal law should govern automated vehicle technology, in lieu of a state patchwork of laws, but if a state passes an AV policy it is important to provide continuity from one state to another. This will encourage competition domestically, which will help the U.S. keep up with other countries that are positioning themselves as global leaders on AVs. This legislation would put Kansas in a category all its own by restricting commercial AV operations to a “middle mile” setting and not allowing all levels of highly automated vehicles or additional options for commercial purposes such as ride sharing and delivery.

As an alternative, the industry is ready to provide language that would position Kansas among the most technology-friendly states while providing consistency and a basic AV framework that is reflective of where the technology stands today. We hope to serve as a resource for the committee and sponsor as the state welcomes new innovative technologies. Thank for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony T. Reinhart".

Tony Reinhart
Director, State and Local Government Affairs
Ford Motor Company