

ABATE of Michigan

Comments to the House Transportation Standing Committee, 22 March 2022

ABATE of Michigan has deep concerns regarding SB 871, SB 706, HB 5568 and HB 5734 as well as for other legislation regarding automated vehicles (AVs), electric vehicles (EVs), accommodations made to the public roadways for such vehicles and the use of public funds to promote the development of new technologies related to these kinds of vehicles.

ABATE's concerns include but are not necessarily limited to the following:

1. We live in a time when our state's traditional infrastructure is heavily stressed and deteriorating. This is also a time when some voices are asking for the development of new transportation technologies.
2. Michigan ABATE believes that we cannot afford to pursue new and untried alterations to our transportation infrastructure while the existing system cries in vain for redesign, repair and modernization.
3. All of Michigan's current road users depend on the existing infrastructure to get to work and to conduct all the business of daily life.
4. It is this infrastructure that must be given first priority and be repaired to a high level of function before we allow the use of our limited resources on unproven technologies, no matter how trendy those technologies may be.
5. Various forces (often driven by profit) are pushing the development of immature technologies that fail to address the needs of today's road users and threaten to make repair of the existing roadways even more difficult and more expensive.
6. AVs for example have repeatedly shown that they are unable to detect large emergency vehicles (with all their lights flashing) even in conditions of unrestricted visibility. Clearly, these systems are not safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and other vulnerable road users, especially in rainy or foggy weather.
7. Indeed, motorcycles and other vulnerable road users are often forgotten in the planning of new roadway technologies. ABATE believes that this must not be allowed to happen as relevant legislation is considered.
8. For example, AV testing is currently taking place on the public roadways and has already ended in too many failures that have taken innocent lives.
9. Proposed highway lanes developed specifically (exclusively?) for EVs would be very expensive and will swallow funding that should be used to make today's roads safer.
10. It is even possible that money unwisely spent on immature technologies may be wasted when implementation of those technologies proves too difficult or impractical.

ABATE of Michigan considers it essential that our existing roadways must be our first priority and that pursuit of legislation that encourages developing technologies take place with the greatest caution and foresight.

Hess Bates

ABATE of Michigan Legislative Officer, Region 19 (Oakland County)

2694 Roseview Drive, Rochester Hills, MI 48306

248-736-0502

hessbates@att.net