SENATE, No. 343

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

217th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2016 SESSION

Sponsored by:
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SYNOPSIS

Directs MVC to establish driver’s license endorsement for autonomous vehicles.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.
AN ACT concerning autonomous vehicles, and supplementing chapter 3 of Title 39 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey

1. For the purposes of this act:
   “Artificial intelligence” means the use of computers and related equipment to enable a machine to duplicate or mimic the behavior of human beings.
   “Autonomous mode” means the operation of the autonomous vehicle without the active control of a human being.
   “Autonomous vehicle” means a motor vehicle that uses artificial intelligence, sensors, global positioning system coordinates, or any other technology to carry out the mechanical operations of driving without the active control and continuous monitoring of a human operator.
   “Sensors” include, without limitation, cameras, lasers, and radar.

2. a. The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall establish a driver’s license endorsement for the operation of autonomous vehicles on the highways, roads, and streets of this State. Except for a person testing an autonomous vehicle under the regulations adopted by the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission pursuant to section 3 of P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill), a person shall not operate an autonomous vehicle in autonomous mode unless that person has obtained an endorsement on that person’s driver’s license to operate an autonomous vehicle.
   b. An endorsement to a driver’s license allowing a person to operate an autonomous vehicle shall not require that a person actively drive the autonomous vehicle.

3. Within 12 months of the effective date of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall adopt regulations, pursuant to the provisions of the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), authorizing the operation of autonomous vehicles on highways, roads, and streets in this State. The regulations shall include, but not be limited to:
   a. Requirements an autonomous vehicle shall meet before it may be operated on any highway, road, or street within this State;
   b. Requirements for proof of insurance as required by section 1 of P.L.1972, c.197 (C.39:6B-1) to test or operate an autonomous vehicle on any highway, road, or street within this State, in consultation with the Commissioner of Banking and Insurance, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1972, c.200 (C.39:3-29.1);
c. Requirements for the registration of the autonomous vehicle, pursuant to R.S.39:3-4;

d. Minimum safety standards for autonomous vehicles and their operation;

e. Requirements for testing autonomous vehicles;

f. Restrictions for testing autonomous vehicles in specified geographic areas; and

g. Any other requirements the chief administrator determines to be necessary.

4. No provision in this act, or in any manual, test, or administrative procedure developed to implement the provisions of this act, shall be deemed to expand the requirements set forth in federal law or regulation. This section shall not be deemed to limit the authority of the chief administrator, or the authority of any State department or agency, to promulgate, pursuant to other provisions of State law, standards and procedures on vehicle inspections that are consistent with federal law and regulation.

5. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill directs the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) to establish a driver’s license endorsement for the operation of autonomous vehicles on the highways, roads, and streets of this State. “Autonomous vehicle” means a motor vehicle that uses artificial intelligence, sensors, global positioning system coordinates, or any other technology that enables it to drive itself without the active control and continuous monitoring of a human operator.

Within 12 months of the effective date of the bill, the Chief Administrator of the MVC (chief administrator) is required to establish regulations authorizing the operation of autonomous vehicles that include, but are not limited to: requirements for the autonomous vehicle before it may be operated on highways, roads, or streets; requirements for proof of insurance to test or operate an autonomous vehicle on highways, roads, or streets in consultation with the Commissioner of Banking and Insurance; requirements for registration; minimum safety standards for autonomous vehicles and their operation; requirements for testing autonomous vehicles; restrictions for testing autonomous vehicles in specified geographic areas; and any other requirements the chief administrator determines to be necessary. Nothing in this bill expands on federal law or limits the authority of the chief administrator, or authority of other State department or agency, to promulgate standards and
procedures on vehicle inspections that are consistent with federal law or regulation.

The bill provides that a person testing an autonomous vehicle is not required to obtain an endorsement on that person's driver's license but, instead, is subject to the regulations adopted by the chief administrator regarding the testing of autonomous vehicles.