



STATEMENT OF
Ken McLeod, Policy Director, League of American Bicyclists
Autonomous Vehicles Tenets Rollout Virtual Press Conference Remarks
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Most people have experienced bad driving while biking. Someone who is distracted, who is aggressive, who passes too close, or honks impatiently.

Automated Vehicles provide an incredible opportunity to improve traffic safety, and to improve the ease with which people can bike, walk, and exist outside of vehicles. Many people that I have met and spoke to in the bike community, whether advocates, club riders, or parents who simply want to feel safe riding with their children, have expressed excitement about automated vehicles behaving better and being safer than human drivers.

But when we get past that initial excitement, too often we find that the hands-off approach of regulators and lawmakers is failing to deliver on the promise of automated vehicles. We find that technologies like Automated Emergency Braking are tested for the safety of people biking and walking in other countries, but not in the United States. We find that a lack of oversight creates dangerous conditions for vulnerable people who are treated as “edge cases” rather than as everyday people who must be made safe.

The League of American Bicyclists is excited to support the Automated Vehicle Tenets today because they recognize the opportunity of automated vehicles and show how we can guarantee public safety moving forward. The United States needs to be proactive and set high safety standards to build trust in automated vehicles and deliver on their opportunity.

Actions like a “vision test” for automated vehicles, so that the public knows they can properly detect and respond to all types of vehicles, people, and objects in diverse road and weather conditions, will build trust, save lives, and show that leadership in traffic safety means prioritizing the most vulnerable.

Leadership in Automated Vehicles alone will not solve our nation’s traffic safety woes. We need safer bike infrastructure, we need safer car and truck designs, and we need slower urban speed limits. But we can’t move toward zero traffic deaths or say that we embrace a safe systems approach without holding new technology to those same goals.

We can’t wait-and-see on the safety of automated vehicles. We can’t let industry move fast and break things when those things are people’s lives. We can’t afford to look back in a decade or two and find that automated vehicles fail to see people biking, strollers, people with dark clothing, or people with dark skin. With the Tenets released today, we hope that lawmakers and the US Department of Transportation see the opportunity of automated vehicles and recognize that delivering on that opportunity requires action.