



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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Governor's Autonomous Vehicle Workgroup

GOVERNOR INSLEE'S ANNOUNCEMENT

"Washington state is already a leader in autonomous vehicle technology. We are an early-adopter that welcomes innovation and the safe testing and operation of AVs," Inslee said. "AVs could help save countless lives, reclaim time spent in traffic, improve mobility and be an important tool in our efforts to combat climate change."

—Governor Jay Inslee



In 2016, Governor Inslee worked with Google executives to recruit their self-driving car program to Washington state. That program (now known as Waymo) has successfully tested AVs throughout the City of Kirkland without incident. Over twenty AV technology companies — both established companies and start-ups — have developed a presence in Washington state. On June 7, 2017, Governor Inslee signed an [executive order](#) to further support the safe testing and operation of autonomous vehicles.

BACKGROUND

Governor Inslee has assembled an Autonomous Vehicle (AV) Workgroup that includes the directors of the Department of Licensing, Department of Transportation, State Patrol, Department of Commerce, the Office of Regulatory Innovation and Assistance, and the Washington Traffic Safety Commission. The Workgroup is chaired by the Governor's Executive Policy Advisor on Transportation and Economic Development.

At the Governor's direction and in cooperation with federal agencies, the AV Workgroup acts as the state's research, policy and regulatory forum to assess state government's role in cultivating and nurturing the safe development of automated technology in vehicles through pilot programs. The Workgroup also examines emerging automated transportation technology in other modes, including freight, aviation, transit, passenger rail and ferries, as well as points of convergence with connected, shared and electric vehicles.



Members of the Governor's AV Workgroup
test-driving Tesla's "auto-pilot"

SCOPE

The Governor has directed the AV Workgroup to assess state government's role in cultivating the safe development of automated and connected technology in vehicles. The Workgroup has also been directed to work with federal agencies, such as USDOT, NHTSA, FMCSA and FHWA, to ensure our state's efforts complement and comply with federal guidelines on automated transportation.



Google's self-driving car in Kirkland, WA, Feb 2016

Specifically, the Workgroup has organized its work around five key areas:

1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Washington state is already a leader in Autonomous Vehicle technology. As a hotbed for innovation and an early adopter of technology, our state has successfully recruited signature companies focused on AV testing, research and development.

- *How can we further leverage our leadership position and recruit more AV efforts to our state?*

2. INFRASTRUCTURE

Although AV technology is working to adapt to existing infrastructure and conditions, there may be a need for public investment in infrastructure, like better signage and lane striping.

- *How can we improve our infrastructure to better accommodate AVs?*

3. LICENSING AND PILOT PROGRAMS

AVs could improve mobility for many populations, including the elderly, disabled and youth, but many of these people do not currently have a driver's license.

- *Under what circumstances might we provide a driver's license exemption for AV users?*

4. SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

AVs could reclaim and make productive countless hours spent in traffic, but distracted driving rules may prevent AV users from taking eyes off the road.

- *Under what circumstances might we provide a distracted driving exemption for AV users?*

5. LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

When it comes to current AV testing, it's very clear who is responsible in the event of an incident: it's the licensed driver who is in the driver's seat at all times. This could be ambiguous as vehicles become more autonomous.

- *Under what circumstances could a licensed driver not be responsible for the actions of a fully autonomous vehicle?*

KEY CONTACT

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Governor Inslee and Elon Musk
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