HOUSE . . . . No. 1280

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Francisco E. Paulino

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act regulating insurance coverage for testing and deployment of autonomous vehicles and establishing school zone safety protocol.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Francisco E. Paulino	*16th Essex*	*1/15/2025*

HOUSE . . . . No. 1280

By Representative Paulino of Methuen, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1280) of Francisco E. Paulino relative to insurance coverage for testing and deployment of and school zone safety protocol for autonomous vehicles. Financial Services.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

_____

An Act regulating insurance coverage for testing and deployment of autonomous vehicles and establishing school zone safety protocol.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1   SECTION 1. Chapter 90 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following

2 sections:

3   Section 64. Definitions

4   As used in sections 64 to 67, inclusive, the following words shall, unless the context

5 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

6   "Autonomous Vehicle" or "AV", a motor vehicle equipped with technology that allows

7 the vehicle to operate without the active control or monitoring of a human operator under

8 specific conditions.

9   "Manufacturer", a person or entity that designs, manufactures, or modifies vehicles to

10 incorporate autonomous driving technology.

11   "Testing Company", an entity authorized to conduct on-road testing of autonomous

12   vehicles within the Commonwealth.

13   "Cybersecurity Liability Insurance", insurance coverage that protects against financial

14   and legal risks arising from unauthorized access to or control of vehicle systems or data.

15   "Product Liability Insurance", insurance coverage that protects the manufacturer from

16   liability resulting from defects or malfunctions in the autonomous technology.

17   Section 65. Insurance Requirements for Autonomous Vehicles

18   (a) Autonomous vehicles operating on public roads in the Commonwealth shall comply

19   with insurance requirements established by the Division of Insurance (DOI), in consultation with

20   the Department of Transportation (MassDOT). These requirements shall ensure adequate

21   coverage for:

22   General liability risks associated with AV operations, including testing and deployment.

23   Product liability to address claims from defects in autonomous technology.

24   Cybersecurity risks, including unauthorized access, hacking, and operational disruptions.

25   Personal Injury Protection (PIP), consistent with the Commonwealth's no-fault insurance

26   laws.

27   Uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage.

28   (b) The DOI shall establish minimum coverage amounts, with specific thresholds for

29   testing and deployment phases, and shall adjust such amounts based on operational profiles and

30   risk assessments.

31   (c) The DOI and MassDOT shall establish a joint task force to ensure coordination in

32   implementing insurance and operational requirements, including data sharing and reporting

33   mechanisms.

34   (d) All autonomous vehicle operations, including testing and deployment, shall comply

35   with the requirements established by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation

36   (MassDOT), including but not limited to, those set forth under Executive Order 572 and any duly

37   promulgated regulations or guidelines issued by MassDOT or the Autonomous Vehicles

38   Working Group.

39   Section 66. School Zone Safety Protocols for Autonomous Vehicles

40   (a) Speed Restrictions: Autonomous vehicles operating in designated school zones shall

41   automatically reduce speed to a maximum of 15 miles per hour using geofencing technology.

42   (b) Pedestrian Detection and Stop Mechanisms: AVs shall employ pedestrian detection

43   systems capable of identifying individuals within 50 feet of a crosswalk and stopping when a

44   pedestrian is detected.

45   (c) Prohibition on Testing During Active School Hours: Testing of AVs in school zones

46   is prohibited during active school hours or high pedestrian traffic periods unless permitted by

47   MassDOT with enhanced monitoring requirements. Limited testing for the purpose of improving

48   school zone safety may be allowed under strict supervision and additional safeguards.

49   (d) Geofencing for School Buses: AVs shall recognize and respect geofenced zones

50   around school buses and halt when a bus displays extended stop signs or flashing lights.

51   (e) Municipal Autonomy and Coordination: Municipalities may enact additional

52   operational requirements for autonomous vehicles, provided such requirements are:

53   Consistent with state regulations established under this act;

54   Reviewed and approved by MassDOT to ensure uniformity and compliance across the

55   Commonwealth; and

56   Clearly communicated to AV operators at least 60 days prior to enforcement to allow

57   adequate preparation and compliance.

58   Section 67. Additional Provisions and Enforcement

59   (a) State-Managed Insurance Pool:

60   The DOI shall establish and manage an insurance pool to support AV companies,

61   distributing risk and providing financial stability for high-risk operations.

62   The DOI shall promulgate regulations within 180 days of the effective date of this act,

63   specifying funding mechanisms, eligibility criteria, and operational guidelines for the insurance

64   pool.

65   (b) Penalties for Noncompliance:

66   MassDOT is authorized to enforce compliance with autonomous vehicle regulations,

67   including the imposition of fines up to $50,000 per violation, suspension of permits, or other

68   penalties as deemed necessary.

69   (c) Public Engagement and Transparency:

70   MassDOT shall establish a public reporting system for autonomous vehicle incidents,

71   including accidents, near misses, and operational disengagements.

72   Annual reports summarizing safety data and regulatory compliance shall be published

73   and made available to the public.

74   MassDOT shall host biannual public forums to engage residents, address concerns, and

75   provide updates on AV operations.

76   (d) Periodic Reviews:

77   The DOI, in consultation with MassDOT, shall review and update AV insurance

78   requirements every three years to reflect advancements in technology and emerging risks.

79   (e) Federal Compliance:

80   The provisions of this act shall comply with all applicable federal laws and regulations

81   governing autonomous vehicles.

82   (f) Workforce Development and Training:

83   The Commonwealth shall allocate funding for workforce development initiatives to train

84   residents for careers in autonomous vehicle technology, including software development,

85   maintenance, and regulatory oversight.

86   (g) Environmental Impact Standards:

87   All autonomous vehicles operating within the Commonwealth shall meet low-emission or

88   zero-emission vehicle standards as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental

89   Protection.

90   (h) Emergency Vehicle Interaction Certification:

91   Autonomous vehicle operators shall demonstrate the capability to detect and respond to

92   emergency vehicles and personnel during operational testing. Certification of this capability shall

93   be required before deployment.

94   SECTION 2. This act shall take effect 120 days after its passage.