California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

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CPUC LAUNCHES NEW AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE PROGRAMS

SAN FRANCISCO, November 19, 2020 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today continued its work to ensure innovative transportation options for all by approving two new autonomous vehicle (AV) programs that allow companies to provide safe passenger transportation services, charge fares, and offer shared trips to the public.

Today's Decision creates two new deployment programs: the Drivered Autonomous Vehicle Deployment Program and the Driverless Autonomous Vehicle Deployment Program, which allow participants to offer passenger service, shared rides, and accept monetary compensation for rides in autonomous vehicles. Companies must hold either a Charter-Party Carrier Class P permit or a Class A charter party certificate in the Drivered AV Passenger Service Pilot Program issued by the CPUC, and a California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) AV Deployment Permit to participate in both AV passenger service programs in the state.

Companies participating in the autonomous vehicle programs are required to submit data and quarterly reports to the CPUC with aggregated and anonymized information about the pick-up and drop-off locations for individual trips; the availability and volume of wheelchair accessible rides; the service levels to disadvantaged communities; the fuel type used by the vehicles and electric charging; the vehicle miles traveled and passenger miles traveled; and engagement with advocates for accessibility and disadvantaged communities.

"Today we usher in an important milestone for the CPUC's regulation of transportation in California by authorizing an expanded deployment framework for autonomous vehicles that protects passenger safety, expands autonomous vehicle availability to all of Californians - including disadvantaged and low-income communities - and works to reduce greenhouse gases," said Commissioner Genevieve

Shiroma, who is assigned to the proceeding. “This Decision also takes important steps to support our study of how autonomous vehicle fleets can be leveraged to support the grid as a demand side management resource, dovetailing on our efforts to incorporate transportation into the electric sector.”

Permit holders in the new driverless deployment program must submit a Passenger Safety Plan that outlines policies and procedures to minimize risk for all passengers in the driverless vehicles, including those with limited mobility, vision impairments, or other disabilities. Additionally, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, permit holders in the program must submit a COVID-19 Emergency Plan following guidance on preventing the transmission of COVID-19.

Today’s Decision establishes four goals that apply to both the existing pilot programs and the new deployment programs: 1) protect passenger safety; 2) expand the benefits of autonomous vehicle technologies to all of California’s communities; 3) improve transportation options for all, particularly for disadvantaged communities and low-income communities; and, 4) reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The CPUC will collect data to monitor the participants’ progress toward each of the goals.

The proposal voted on is available at: https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M351/K407/351407361.PDF.

Documents related to the proceeding are available at: https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5_PROCEEDING_SELECT:R1212011.

For more information on the CPUC’s Autonomous Vehicle Passenger Service Pilot Programs, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/avcpilotinfo.

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians’ access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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