

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 3026
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Transportation
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 2017, the State of Texas adopted landmark legislation allowing for both testing and deployment of autonomous vehicles on public roads. Autonomous vehicles have the potential to improve road safety, create jobs, and expand access for people with disabilities or who live in food deserts. While the law governing autonomous vehicles creates a regulatory framework that appropriately balances the needs of business and technology with public safety, an opportunity exists for tailored revisions to provide greater clarity for operators, encouraging the growth of this burgeoning technology. Multiple manufacturers now build purpose-built autonomous vehicles that contain no space for human occupants and have no useful application for manual controls or other equipment needed on traditional vehicles. H.B. 3026 seeks to address this issue by exempting autonomous vehicles operated exclusively by an automated driving system from certain vehicle equipment laws and regulations.

H.B. 3026 amends the Transportation Code to exempt an automated motor vehicle that is designed to be operated exclusively by the automated driving system for all trips from state motor vehicle equipment laws or regulations that relate to or support motor vehicle operation by a human driver and are irrelevant for an automated driving system.

If a vehicle safety inspection is required for the operation of such an automated motor vehicle, the vehicle must automatically be considered to pass the inspection with respect to any equipment covered by the bill's exemption or any equipment that is not subject to inspection under state law.

H.B. 3026 amends current law relating to the operation and regulation of certain automated motor vehicles.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends the heading to Section 545.452, Transportation Code, to read as follows:

Sec. 545.452. EXCLUSIVE REGULATION OF AUTOMATED MOTOR VEHICLES AND AUTOMATED DRIVING SYSTEMS.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 545.452(a), Transportation Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that unless otherwise provided by Subchapter J (Operation of Automated Motor Vehicles), automated motor vehicles, including any commercial use or operation of automated motor vehicles, and automated driving systems are governed exclusively by Subchapter J and Section 547.618, rather than exclusively by Subchapter J. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter K, Chapter 547, Transportation Code, by adding Section 547.618, as follows:

Sec. 547.618. EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN AUTOMATED MOTOR VEHICLES. (a) Defines "automated motor vehicle" and "automated driving system."

(b) Provides that an automated motor vehicle that is designed to be operated exclusively by the automated driving system for all trips is not subject to motor vehicle equipment laws or regulations of this state that relate to or support motor vehicle operation by a human driver and that are not relevant for an automated driving system.

(c) Requires that the vehicle, if a vehicle safety inspection is required under this code for the operation of a vehicle described by Subsection (b), automatically be considered to pass the inspection with respect to any equipment the requirements from which the vehicle is exempt under Subsection (b), or the inspection of which is not required under Section 548.051 (Vehicles and Equipment Subject to Inspection).

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2021.