



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 23, 2016

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Assemblywoman Bonilla Introduces Bill to Advance Testing of Autonomous Vehicles

SACRAMENTO – Assemblywoman Susan A. Bonilla (D-Concord) introduced legislation, which will authorize the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) to conduct a pilot project to test next generation, shared autonomous vehicles. Assembly Bill 1592, allows CCTA to test low-speed, multi-passenger, autonomous vehicles that are not equipped with a steering wheel, brake pedal, accelerator or operator.

“With the advancement of transportation technologies, we are on the verge of transforming our society,” said Assemblywoman Bonilla. “It is essential that we support greater opportunities to test autonomous vehicles here in our state - not only to ensure that they are safe, reliable and can be successfully integrated into our current infrastructure - but also for California to remain a global leader in innovation.”

The Department of Motor Vehicles was required to adopt regulations for the testing and operation of autonomous vehicles on public roads by January, 2015 however they are still drafting the final regulations. Current law requires that autonomous vehicles are equipped with a steering wheel, brake pedal, accelerator, and driver inside the vehicle before they can operate on public roads. The fully autonomous and electric vehicles CCTA plans to test operates without any of these features. CCTA is slated to begin testing the first-and-last mile vehicles, which operate at speeds of around 20-25 miles per hour, as early as this summer. AB 1592 supports testing at GoMentum Station, the largest secure transportation technology proving grounds in the nation, and a private business park in Contra Costa County, to be designated by CCTA.

“The Contra Costa Transportation Authority and GoMentum Station are excited to be pioneering the next generation of transportation technology in Contra Costa County,” said Randy Iwasaki, Executive Director of CCTA. “Assembly Bill 1592 will enable testing of shared, autonomous vehicle technology as an innovative approach to helping travelers get to transit stations, schools, health care centers, business districts, and other local amenities without the hassle of driving and parking – which could be a replicable solution for many urban and suburban communities in the United States.”

“Given our state’s crumbling infrastructure, combined with our commitment to reduce climate change, these people movers can be a viable alternative to personal automobiles,” continued Bonilla. “They have the capability of conveniently connecting riders to larger transit networks and local destinations, while alleviating traffic and parking congestion, and improving mobility.”

Assemblywoman Susan A. Bonilla (D-Concord) was elected in November 2010 and represents California’s 14th Assembly District, which includes Contra Costa County and Solano County.

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