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**CHAMBER
OF PROGRESS**

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**Testimony of Montana Williams
Director, State and Local Public Policy
Chamber of Progress**

**New Mexico Department of Transportation
Proposed Autonomous Vehicle Testing Rule**

Good afternoon,

My name is Montana Williams and I am the Director of State and Local Public Policy for the
Chamber of Progress, a tech industry coalition promoting technology's progressive future. Our
organization works to ensure that all Americans benefit from technological leaps. Our corporate
partners include Cruise, Nuro, Waymo, and Zoox, but our partners don't have a vote or veto over
our positions.

We strongly support the Department of Transportation's proposed Autonomous Vehicle Testing
Rule. By taking this smart approach to AV regulation, New Mexico is on its way to being an even
safer, more convenient, and more equitable place to live.

First, autonomous vehicles will help close the food gap. All New Mexico residents should have
access to healthy, affordable food options in their neighborhoods. Residents in low food access
areas continue to be plagued by the food desert crisis and are forced to travel far away to get to
grocery stores. In some communities AVs are delivering groceries and food via low-speed,
seatless, passengerless autonomous vehicles. This would give New Mexico residents that live
outside food-rich areas the same convenient and affordable access to fresh fruits, vegetables, milk,
and meat they need to live happily and healthily.

Second, autonomous vehicles will help close the accessibility gap. One in four adults in New
Mexico live with a disability.[1] Though public transit is available, it's harder for those with disabilities
to navigate by bus in times of inclement weather, in times when an accessible stop isn't available, or
when there is no room for their equipment on a busy day. For the blind and other people living with
disabilities, safe autonomous vehicles can't arrive fast enough.

Third, autonomous vehicles will bring safer streets and reduce the number of accidents. In 2021,
479 people died in traffic related incidents in New Mexico.[2] Research shows that at least 90% of car
crashes are caused by human error, and studies suggest that putting AVs on the road now could

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[1]Disability & Health U.S. State Profile Data for New Mexico (Adults 18+ years of age), Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention, (Nov. 2021) https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts/new-mexico.html
[2]New Mexico Monthly Traffic Fatality Report, New Mexico Department of Transportation, (Mar. 2022)
https://gps.unm.edu/sites/default/files/traffic/web-fatallog2021_02MAR2022_0.pdf

save hundreds of thousands of lives over the long term. By eliminating cases of distracted drivers, drivers under the influence, or geographically lost drivers, AVs can reduce the number of pedestrian and bike fatalities that occur in the state.

Finally, autonomous vehicles will spur new jobs in New Mexico. In 2021, The Federal Department of Transportation reported that the use of automation systems would create jobs in the transportation and logistics industries, and other business sectors. The US Department of Labor and its state partners have created job transition and retraining programs to assist those affected by the introduction of autonomy. These entities help drivers adapt to new technologies and market conditions, helping them find gainful employment. Driverless vehicles would also cut down the amount of turnover the trucking industry faces as most drivers are of retirement age or close to it. And New Mexico is poised to be a national leader in autonomous trucking, bringing thousands of related jobs to the state.

With the tremendous potential of autonomous vehicles to make New Mexico a safer and more equitable place, it is so important to test, improve, and deploy autonomous vehicles without delay. For the sake of supporting those with disabilities, addressing food deserts, reducing traffic deaths, and increasing employment opportunities, we encourage you to support the proposed Autonomous Vehicle Testing Rule.

Thank you.