



**National Conference of State Legislatures
Office of State-Federal Relations**

U.S. DOT Released Updated Autonomous Vehicle Guidelines

Sept. 13, 2017

On Sep. 12, the National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) released new federal guidance for Automated Driving Systems (ADS). [A Vision for Safety 2.0](#), the latest guidance for automated driving systems to industry and the states.

The guidance builds on NHTSA's 2016 guidance. For more information on the 2016 guidance please see [NCSL's Info Alert](#).

Separated into two sections – voluntary guidance and technical assistance to states – the new guidance focuses on [SAE international levels of automation 3-5](#), clarifies that entities do not need to wait to test or deploy their ADS, revises design elements from the safety self-assessment, aligns federal guidance with the latest developments and terminology, and clarifies the role of federal and state governments. The guidance reinforces the voluntary nature of the guidelines, and does not come with a compliance requirement or enforcement mechanism. The guidance attempts to provide best practices for legislatures, incorporating common safety-related components and elements regarding ADSs that states should consider incorporating into legislation. Additionally, it includes DOT's view of federal and state roles, and provides [best practices for state legislatures](#), and [best practices for highway safety officials](#).

NHTSA's updated guidance comes on the heels of the Sept. 6, passage of the SELF Drive Act ([H.R. 3388](#)) that aims to make several changes to federal law impacting autonomous vehicles. NCSL, along with several state groups, issued letters as the bill made its way through the House. The bill includes four main sections: expansion of federal preemption; updates to federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS); exemptions from FMVSS and a federal automated vehicles advisory council. Senate actions on autonomous vehicles are underway, with a staff draft bill [released](#) Sept. 8 from Senators John Thune (R-S.D.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.), seeking feedback from other lawmakers and advocates prior to formal introduction. For more information on the House bill, see [NCSL's Info Alert](#).

For any further questions or concerns regarding NHTSA's release, please contact NCSL staff [Ben Husch](#) (202-624-7779) or [Kristen Hildreth](#) (202-624-3597).

Key Documents:

[NHTSA: Automated Driving Systems 2.0 – A Vision for Safety](#)

[State Legislation on Autonomous Vehicles](#)