



Trump administration and Department of Transportation release updates to policy on autonomous vehicles

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The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the National Science and Technology Council released an update to the DOT's policy regarding autonomous vehicles on 8 January 2020. The document, "Ensuring American Leadership in Automated Vehicle Technologies: Automated Vehicles 4.0" (AV 4.0), follows two previous Trump administration policy statements from the DOT regarding its approach to autonomous vehicles: "Automated Driving Systems 2.0: A Vision for Safety" (ADS 2.0) released in September 2017 and "Preparing for the Future of Transportation: Automated Vehicles 3.0" (AV 3.0) released in October 2018. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao unveiled the new guidelines in her keynote speech at the Consumer Electronics Show conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In contrast to the Trump administration's previous two statements, AV 4.0 takes a broader, "whole-of-government" look at how a wide array of federal agencies, offices, and commissions are working toward integrating autonomous vehicles into American life. Indeed, AV 4.0 describes the efforts of 38 different federal departments, ranging from the Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services to the National Park Service and National Aeronautics and Space Administration, to advance autonomous technology. According to AV 4.0, the individual programs and projects are all aimed at three guiding principles that unify the federal government's efforts:

- **Protect users and communities:** Prioritize safety, emphasize security and cybersecurity, ensure privacy and data security, and enhance mobility and accessibility.
- **Promote efficient markets:** Remain technology-neutral, protect American innovation and creativity, and modernize regulations.
- **Facilitate coordinated efforts:** Promote consistent standards and policies, ensure a consistent federal approach, and improve transportation system-level effects.

Like ADS 2.0 and AV 3.0, the new policy statement furthers the DOT's commitment to remaining flexible and technology-neutral and to keeping its guidance entirely voluntary. And while AV 4.0 asserts that the "U.S. Government will be proactive about AVs and will provide guidance, best practices, conduct research and pilot programs, and other assistance to help stakeholders plan and make the investments needed for a dynamic and flexible future for all Americans," the

document does not include any new binding requirements for autonomous vehicle or technology developers. Nor does AV 4.0 provide any timelines or updates on the rulemakings and pilot programs to promote autonomous vehicle testing and deployment that were previewed in AV 3.0 nearly 15 months ago.

AV 4.0 will be published in the Federal Register and will be available for public review and comment.

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