BLUEGREEN ALLIANCE

CREATING GOOD JOBS, A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, AND A FAIR AND THRIVING ECONOMY

BlueGreen Alliance: Autonomous Vehicles Principles

The BlueGreen Alliance (BGA) is a unique and enduring coalition that leverages the collective strength of its partners and their members to build consensus and advocate for shared solutions that fight the climate crisis, create good-paying, union jobs, advance racial and economic justice, and protect the health and fundamental rights of working people. BGA unifies its members into a powerful voice for a clean, thriving, and equitable economy.

Autonomous vehicles (AVs) have the potential to reshape transportation in the United States. Done right, the deployment of AVs can help spur domestic manufacturing and create cleaner, safer communities with stronger multi-modal transportation options. However, this transformation also presents significant potential risks and upheavals for workers and communities. BGA firmly believes that the deployment of AVs must only be executed with strong guardrails in place that protect workers and the environment.

Legislation or regulation on AVs should include the following considerations and protections:

Oversight and Safety

The deployment of AVs must be contingent on strong federal standards for oversight, reporting, impact assessment, and transparency. Government must have the necessary tools to evaluate and manage AV deployment in the best interests of workers, communities, and the economy.

- Before implementing major policy changes intended to ease or increase AV deployment, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) must conduct an Employment Disruption Assessment to investigate the likely impact on transportation and manufacturing jobs. DOT must possess the necessary tools to manage AV deployment while safeguarding jobs.
- Any increased AV deployment must be contingent on:
    - A proactive, worker-centered federal regulatory framework for AVs;
    - Strong testing standards and continuous performance and safety oversight of AVs;
    - Continuous oversight and regular assessments of the impacts of AV deployment on road and operator safety, jobs, and traffic congestion;
    - Publicly accessible data on the performance and operation of AVs, including safety, workforce, privacy, and environmental impacts;

- A commitment to federal studies on the economic impacts of vehicle automation on issues beyond driver displacement, including impacts of lost tax revenue and impacts on supply chain-connected businesses;
- Strong domestic content standards to ensure AV deployment results in more jobs, higher quality jobs, and greater job security for transportation and manufacturing workers; and
- Safeguards, including claw back mechanisms, to allow government to manage AV deployment if needed in response to public safety risks or negative job impacts.

Workforce Protections

Lawmakers have both an opportunity and responsibility to protect vehicle operators and the automotive industry. With strong policies, AV adoption can support onshoring, greater union density, and improvements in job quality, and ensure workers are supported and uplifted amid change.

- Workers should be held harmless by increased AV deployment. Where job disruption or displacement occurs, industry and government must provide robust resources for workers, such as: meaningful reemployment and income support, intensive career services, supportive services, continuity of healthcare and retirement benefits, and high-quality training—including up-skilling for incumbent workers adapting to new AV technologies—and new grant programs for displaced workers to be guaranteed new high-wage jobs as part of an economically sustainable career pathway.
- Government must create a bridge of wage support for displaced workers modeled on the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers' (UAW) Supplemental Unemployment Benefits (SUB) at Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis, as well as the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers program[i], including Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) and Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA).
- Federal funding must reward high-road manufacturers and require recipients to provide workforce development plans if they use funds to purchase AVs (modeled on workforce development plan requirements for the U.S. Federal Transit Administration's Low and No Emissions Bus Program[ii]) and must include protections for employees impacted by the receipt of the federal funds.[iii]
- Laws should include direct labor representation on advisory bodies like the DOT Intelligent Transportation Systems Program Advisory Committee (ITSPAC).
- The federal government must require AVs to have high domestic content to ensure high levels of domestic production and expand higher quality manufacturing jobs and job security for America's autoworkers.
- The federal government must require companies operating AVs and automakers to commit that deployment of AVs will not result in outsourcing, subcontracting, or the erosion of job quality (such as a lowering of wages, reduction of benefits, less predictable schedules, and a less safe and healthy workplace).

- Federal laws must require qualified, certified operators to remain present on all on-road vehicles used for public transportation, including transit and yellow school buses, to ensure safety and to assist passengers.
- Federal law must require qualified, certified operators remain present with every vehicle used to handle hazardous materials (HAZMAT).
- AVs must have human oversight by an individual who is located in the United States and is certified to operate the vehicle where necessary.
- The federal government must develop tools to manage the scale of AV deployment, up to and including DOT federal authority to halt deployment, if data shows that AV deployment is adversely impacting public safety or American jobs.
- Employers should be held accountable for actions that lead to job displacement and be required to provide proper notice.

Environment

The deployment of AVs should further transportation decarbonization goals, including the deployment of electric vehicles (EVs) and EV technologies, decreased road congestion, expanded public transportation, and safer streets for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Pair AV technology with EV technology. All new light-duty AVs should be battery electric vehicles (BEVs). All other new AVs should be BEVs or other types of zero-emission vehicles (i.e., vehicles with zero tailpipe emissions of any air pollutant) where such zero-emissions technology is reasonably anticipated to be technologically feasible. This is meant to give primary consideration to the public health and environmental benefits of reduced emissions of air pollutants (including smog- and soot-forming pollutants, greenhouse gases, and hazardous air pollutants), while also considering technological feasibility, costs, and other factors.
- Federal incentives should encourage EV charging infrastructure that can also support AVs.
- Federal laws must limit circumstances where autonomous vehicles are permitted to operate without any occupant(s)—increasing road congestion—and should incentivize the use of public transit and ride share services that maximize the number of passengers per trip.
- To the extent ride share or fleet AVs operate without passengers, appropriate mileage-based fees must be assessed, with revenues reinvested in workforce development, public transit operations, and clean transportation infrastructure to create a positive feedback loop of worker and environmental protections.
- The federal government must ensure that the adoption of AVs doesn't perpetuate or worsen existing inequalities and instead gives all people access to cleaner transportation options. This includes continued and increased investment in mass transit and high-capacity transportation modes like transit rail and bus. AVs should provide necessary

connections to public transportation and augment public transit services, not replace them.

- The federal government should also support efforts to ensure AVs broadly support multi-modal transportation, including support for communities to expand bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Federal laws must not preempt state (or local) regulations of AVs, except where such state regulations are less protective of the workforce, the environment, or public safety.

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[i] U.S. Department of Labor, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers. https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/tradeact

[ii] Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, 49 U.S. Code § 5339 - Grants for buses and bus facilities. https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/49/5339#:~:text=(vi)examines,the%20existing%20workforce

[iii] DOL, Public Transit Employee Protections. https://www.dol.gov/agencies/olms/compliance-assistance/mass-transit-employee-protections