



June 25, 2012

Chair Bonnie Lowenthal  
Assembly Transportation Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 112  
Sacramento, CA

**Oppose SB 1298**

Dear Chair Lowenthal:

I am writing on behalf of Consumer Watchdog to express our opposition to SB 1298, which would allow Google's driverless cars on our highways. As you know, we are troubled by the threat to privacy potentially posed by these vehicles.

I understand that the committee intends to answer some privacy concerns by amending the bill to require that the manufacturers of the driverless technology disclose all the data the vehicles will gather. Unfortunately this proposal is insufficient.

Google's entire business model is based on building digital dossiers about our personal behavior and using them to sell the most personal advertising to us. You're not Google's customer; you are its product – the one it sells to corporations willing to pay any price to reach you. Will the driverless technology be just about getting us from point to point or about tracking how we got there and what we did along the way?

SB 1298 must be amended to provide that driverless cars gather only the data necessary to operate the vehicle and retain that data only as long as necessary for their operation. It should not be used for any additional purpose such as marketing or advertising without the consumer's explicit opt-in consent.

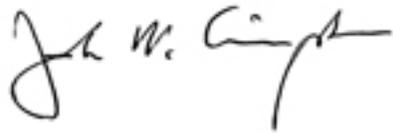
Consumers enthusiastically adopted the new technology of the Internet. What we were not told was that our use of the Information Superhighway would be monitored and tracked in order to personalize corporate marketing and make Google a fortune. Now that Google is taking to the freeways, we must prevent inappropriate collection and storage of data about our personal movements and environment before we allow Google's robots to take to the roads and report back to the Googleplex.

Consumer Watchdog supports driverless car technology and predicts it will be commonplace sooner than many of us expect. However, it must not be allowed to become yet another way to track us in our daily lives. Internet technology was implemented with little regard to protecting users' privacy. We are playing catch-up for our failure to consider the societal impact of a new technology. Only this year has the Federal Trade Commission called for the implementation of a Do Not Track system that would allow consumers to let websites know that they do not want data about their web surfing to be gathered.

The time to ensure that this new driverless car technology has the necessary privacy protections is while it is being designed and developed. Trying to catch up after it is broadly implemented simply will not work. That is why I call on you to amend SB 1298 to require that consumers must give opt-in consent before any data gathered through driverless car technology is used for any purpose other than driving the vehicle.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Simpson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John M. Simpson  
Privacy Project Director